

THE *Pulp* COLLECTOR

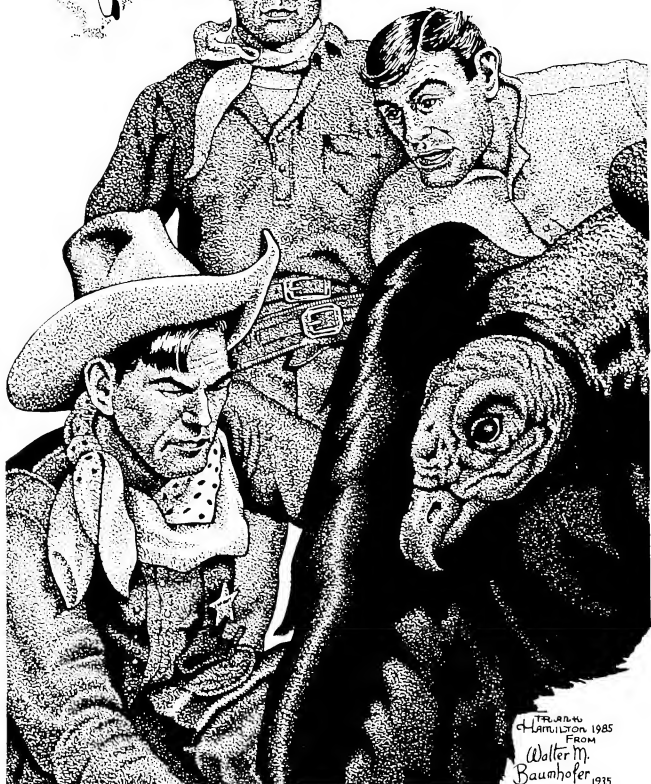


ILLUSTRATION
FROM
Walter M.
Baumhofer 1935

THE Pulp COLLECTOR

VOL. 1 #2

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FALL 1985

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Cover art by Frank Hamilton
from a Pete Rice pulp by
Walter Baumhofer
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EDITOR'S NOTES

by
John P. Gunnison

Welcome to the second issue of The Pulp Collector. I can truthfully say that the first issue was quite a success, judging from the comments and the mail that I have received. But there is normally bad things that come with the good things. First off because I decided to go the heavier stock paper and glue binding, the weight of the magazine makes the cost

of postage so high, that I will have to resort to Parcel Post. I really do not like to do this, but because of the high cost of printing the magazine, the extra postage really puts me in a hole financially. If you would still like to receive your magazine first class, please send an additional .75 per issue to cover the difference.

PULP LETTERS

Dear John,

Enjoyed TPC....may it prosper. Regarding the poor quality of the pulp cover repros--I have seen nothing but excellent results in a series of nostalgia mags published by: Ms. Linda Downey, the World of Yesterday, Route 3-Box 263-W, Wayneville, NC. 28786 and suggest you contact her as to how she achieves such results.

John Dinan
Topsfield, MA.

"John, thanks for the information, and I'm sure the free plug won't hurt Ms. Downey. But hopefully I will have the problem licked by going to half-tones. They cost more and take longer to do, but the results are much better than photocopies."

Dear Sir,

Congratulations on the first issue of your new magazine. I have never heard of Don Diavolo or the Skipper before, but they sound good and I wish they would join Doc Savage in paperback reprints as I've read G-8 and the Spider are about to do.

In future issues, how about

articles on Space Hawk, Kri Gore the Jungle Lord, Tumithak of the Corridors, Captain Zero, The Purple Invasion which lasted for 13 issues of Operator #5, and a magazine called Science Fiction Western, as well as a pulp trivia quiz.

I hope you can help me out in starting a collection. I'm interested in stories about beautiful girls being chased by bug eyed monsters, as well as stories about space pirates, space wars and World War II spy stories; also I wonder if there were any World War II westerns similar to some of the western movies that came out at that time.

I would appreciate it if you would tell me which magazines these stories appeared in, or where to find that information.

You have a fine magazine and I wish you luck with it.

Paul Ragadale Jr.
Marion, IN.

"Paul, you have many good suggestions, as well as questions. If you can find enough information on the pulps and characters in question, why don't you write an article and send it in for our readers. If you are looking for specifics concerning the bug eyed monsters and the

westerns why don't we ask the readers if they have a list and if so send it to The Pulp Collector and we could forward it to you."

John,

My God! What a fine first issue. You are to be congratulated--even if I was a part of it. Fantastic job if I do say so myself. Anyhow I just wanted you to know the whole issue was first rate. It joins with Echoes, Quest and Nemesis. One never can tell how long such magazines will last with the limited audiences we have for the pulps. But we can all hope with good articles by everyone--and men like you behind the magazine.

Woods "Nick" Carr

"Woods, thank you for your kind letter and your support while at PulpCon. I must say to everyone, that without articles like the one Mr. Carr writes, The Pulp Collector would be many wonderful blank pages."

Dear John,

Just received TPC #1 and boy was I surprised at how nice it came out. You really had some great articles (especially Sampson's and Murray's) and your production values were real good. I can see we have a new and important mag in the field. You really did a nice job. (Congratulations!)

Gary Lovisi
Brooklyn, NY.

"Thanks Gary. Gary was one of two to send in something for the Best Pulp Cover. (See this issue for the other) And as you'll read in this issue, Gary writes about the pulp influences that crossed over into paperbacks."

Dear John,

The first issue of THE PULP COLLECTOR arrived today. What a pleasant surprise. My overall impression, GREAT.

It is a very professional looking job. The binding is more than expected. The weight of the cover and pages is impressive. The front cover illustration is by Frank Hamilton. (As is this issue--ed) I do not think there is a better talent around today. I like the table of contents. I do not use it when the journal first arrives. I read from cover to cover. But later when I want to look something up and I know it was in such and such journal, I skim through the table of contents until I find the issue with the article. I love the two columns per page. It means I can read without losing my place as my eyes scan from the end of one line to the beginning of the next. The interior illustrations are plentiful which is good, but the covers came through a little murky which is bad, but I can't complain because there are so many and besides covers are hard to do. Although some of these new duplicating machines do a good job with colors in black and white, and I do not mean XEROX machines.

The Bob Sampson article of 5 DETECTIVE NOVELS was interesting. But then any article by Sampson is interesting. Although I do not understand the confusion by such old historians with page count in a magazine. Because of the presses that were used all magazines have a multiple of 16 pages. So therefore they have either 112 pages or 128 pages or 144 pages, or well you see the idea. That is even true today with the comic books. Some of the publishers wanted to give the impression of more pages and began numbering both sides of the front cover as pages 1 and 2.

I do not know about Gary Lovisi's choice for favorite cover (not one I would choose) but I disagree with you,

in regards to your "worst cover". Yes disappointing in that it does not feature Doc. So I think most of your feeling is disappointment. Just like my initial reaction to the Doc Savage movie. It was a disappointment in that the ideas were all wrong and the villains were ridiculous. On watching it for the third and fourth times and realizing this is a Hollywood version, I can say it is not bad. Of course you have to strip out such scenes as the cradle. If you want some BAD covers for DOC SAVAGE look at some of the surrealist ones such as July-August 1947 or November-December 1947.

The article of Big Nose Serrano by Will Murray was entertaining. The article on DON DIAVOLO by Nick Carr was great. I did not realize there was such a connection between him and THE GREEN LAMA. Were the authors, friends, or was it editorial policy to connect the two series? The author, under his real name, Clayton Rawson, wrote a series of hard cover books about another magician, MERLINI THE GREAT. The DON DIAVOLO stories were reprinted. In 1941, Coward-McCann, a Canadian firm, published a hard cover book called Death Out of Thin Air by Stuart Towne. It contained the stories Ghost of the Undead and Death Out of Thin Air (the first two stories). Then there were two digest sized magazines. PENNANT MYSTERY by Maco Publishing had Death Out of Thin Air. YOGI MYSTERIES published by Wiegers Publishing had Death from Nowhere which contains The Claws of Satan and The Enchanted Dagger. All of these facts come from CUMULATIVE BOOK INDEX and THE PAPERBACK PRICE GUIDE and a review by Angelo Panagos in THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE for June 1976.

The article on THE SKIPPER by Link Huller and Will Murray was great. My only worry is reprinting articles that are not that old. Would you not do better to go back to BRONZE SHADOWS or THE PULP ERA to find articles to reprint or even some of the old issues of XENOPHILE. The

small articles were well done and enjoyable. I can not see how you can improve other than making sure that when authors say something that is not in the magazine they are reviewing that you force them to reveal their source for the information. Namely is it word of mouth from someone's memory, and therefore subject to error, or does it come from a letter or document from that era.

Thank you for a well done first issue. I hope you can maintain the quality of this issue in future ones.

Albert Tonik
Dresher, PA.

"Thanks Albert! I do not want to be a reprint publication, but if the right article comes along I certainly will. (See Will Murray's article this month.) Also you hit the problem right on the head. The weight of the paper and cover has made me switch to Parcel Post mailing, as First Class runs me far too much to allow me to continue."

Dear Mr. Gunnison,

Our mutual friend, Wooda Carr, says your new magazine "The Pulp Collector" is excellent and urges me to send for a copy. (...) I had a firm by the name of Popular Publications which I sold in 1974, but I still dabble in magazines. It's like dope! Can't get it out of my system. Best of luck with "The Pulp Collector."

Henry Steeger
NYC, NY

"Thank you Mr. Steeger. It certainly is a pleasure and an honor to have such a pulp legend enjoying the work of others that have enjoyed the product you and your people put out all those many years."

BEST COVER

In my opinion, the cover for this *Spicy Mystery* is one of the best of all time. The cover was painted by H.J. Ward and the colors are garish and the subject ghoulish. One of the best examples of a weird menace cover as well. What more can you ask for?



WORST COVER

We go from the supreme to the pits. A cover with very little meaning. What are the two covering from? Are they afraid that his finger might go off? The balding man looks as though it might well be William Wagner. (see Will Murray's article this issue - ed.) The cover lacks not only meaning, but also clarity. A truly un-exciting cover.

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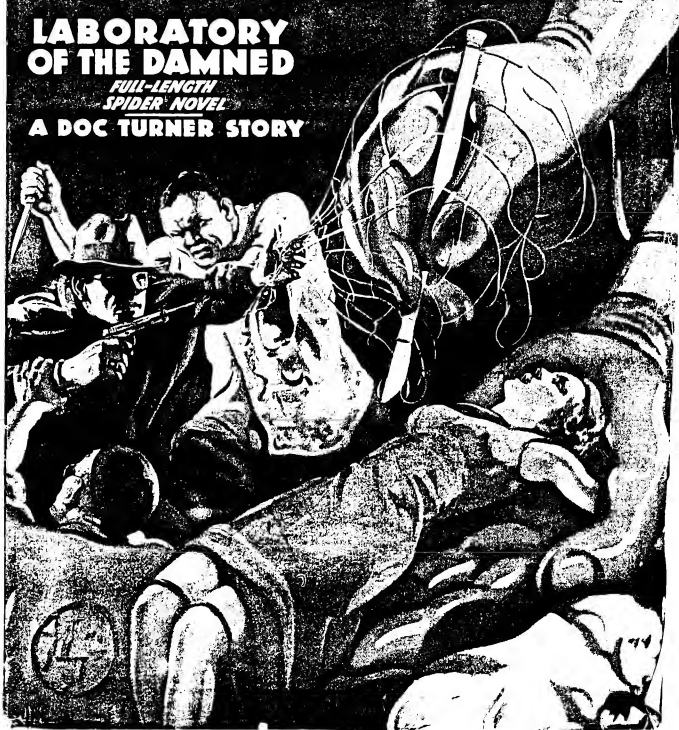
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NITA VAN SLOAN--A PORTRAIT

by
Nick Carr

Preface—"The most vividly drawn, the most lethal and superb of all the pulp heroines was a beautiful and charming ex-debutante name Nita Van Sloan." So remarked Pulpologist Robert Sampson. There is but one other lady almost as well defined, Nellie Gray, from the Avenger pulps. I'd like to take a step further with you kind permission and see now if I can draw a written likeness of a most remarkable individual, the woman who loved The Spider.

The reader learns in "The Spider Strikes," October of 1933, that "she was in the soft light extremely pretty." Nita first met Richard Wentworth on the old Msuretania returning from Europe. At the time "she had been breathtakingly lovely in a cream satin gown that had set off the clear beauty of her shoulders and arms." There had even been a 'lilt' in her voice. (The voice was actually a rich contralto, lovely, warm. Lilt but the way is simply a lively, buoyant, cheerful song or air.)

She was in her middle twenties, probably twenty-six (26), with deep blue eyes, chestnut brown curly hair. Her face was a perfect oval. There was a dimple at one corner of her mouth which came as a result of compressing her lips. "It was a delicate face and so vibrant with life that it held the strength of a spring day." There was no lack of worldly experience in her eyes. "She had seen life, understood it, and was not afraid."

Nita spoke several languages fluently, including Hindustani, Italian, French, with a working knowledge of Arabic and others as well. She knew Morse code, having spent hours practicing with Wentworth. (At his instance all the members of his small group could read and receive without the aid of pencil and paper.) The art of lip reading was something

Wentworth also taught her. Also the various nerve centers of the human body were nothing new to her. She had chemistry and laboratory experience.

Between her and Wentworth, there existed a subtle sixth sense that made speech almost unnecessary. Wentworth was convinced there was present a whole cosmic series of thought-waves of which mortals were as yet unaware. He and Nita therefore met somewhere on this infinite plane of thought transference because both were mystically attuned to each other. Nita had a knowledge of practical psychology.

Indeed Nita shared Wentworth's most inner secrets. She was also an excellent horse woman, had many hours of flying time in various types of plane. As the mate of the Spider, she was also a woman who had killed. It was in "Reign of the Silver Terror," September of 1934, we find evidence of this: "She flung herself towards the body of the closest fallen gunman, snatched up his gun and fired it twice straight at the criminal nearest her. His eyes closed then and he collapsed." Indeed "those slim white hands of hers could shoot a gun with accuracy that almost rivaled the Spider's. Her muscles were hardened by physical instruction that Wentworth had insisted she take as the Spider's mate."

Nor did the rudiments of fencing and the art of ju-jitsu escape her. On the lighter side she played the piano. She was a smoker, using two different brands. One was a special Russian cigarette. The other a blended Benson & Hedges Egyptian.

It seemed the war and financial crash of 1929 had swept away almost all of the Van Sloan family fortune. Because of this Nita took up painting and sold most of them. "She liked to paint the Palisades at sunset and soft, morning lights on the great river." Because of the family name, Nita was able to remain in the society forefront. She was related to those Van Sloan's who came to Ameri-

*NITA VAN SLOAN*

can shores before the Revolution. Her father had died in the World War I. In "Slaves of the Murder Syndicate," February of 1936, we learn that "Nita had only a fixed income which with falling dividends was barely enough to support her."

It seemed Wentworth had given her the power of attorney to act during some of his extended absences. At one time he willed his estate to her, but it had been confiscated under the crooked reign of one Senator Hoey in, "The Mayor of Hell," January of 1936. (So there were times when even Wentworth turned up without sufficient funds.)

In the beginning, Nita maintained a Tower Apartment in Riverside

Mansions, overlooking the Hudson River. It was reached by climbing stairs from where the elevator ended. (When Norvell Page took over the Spider casebook from R.T.M. Scott, a few changes were bound to occur.) A servant's entrance was added and the stairs were gone. "A sleepy elevator operator shot them upwards. Wentworth crossed the hall, touched a white button." (See "Citadel of Hell," March of 1934, and "The Corpse Cargo," July of 1934.) Nita had a maid in "The Spider Strikes."

Her studio apartment-duplex-living room's entire west wall was a crimson draped window. There was also a fireplace with a stone hearth. A small table sat near an archway

leading into the breakfast room. The interior also contained a concert sized grand piano and Wentworth usually kept on of his violin's there. Somewhere within the confines were two additional features--one, a secret compartment in the wall's baseboards containing items of the Spider. Two, in her dressing room a wardrobe area, behind a secret panel was a row of clothing and disguise garb. (See "The Pain Emperor," February of 1935.)

In, "Blight of the Blazing Eyes," April of 1937, the entire place was ransacked. When Wentworth visited Nita his private signal on the apartment bell was two short, one long ring. In, "Slaves of the Laughing Death," March of 1940, the author stated her "Riverside Towers apartment was up on the 21st floor. Below was Riverside Drive and the Hudson River."

Along the way Nita had a place on Central Park West called the Northern Arms Apartments. It was on the third floor, overlooking Central Park. The living room was "au-



perbly furnished." The building had a doorman. In the kitchen a closet opened into a corridor that led to the adjoining building, where there was another apartment, almost a duplicate of the other. Apparently Nita owned both, the second one having its entrance on a side street. (There is now a possibility she might have owned both buildings.) She and that connecting corridor built as a means of escape. In the basement there was an exit to a garage in the rear, where she kept two cars--a sedan and coupe. Late (See "The Spider and the Fire God," August 1939), a secret door and dressing room had been added, (with the help of Wentworth's trusted aides.).

Nita had various maids, including Lola in "The Whispering Death," December of 1938, Suzette in "The Deathless One," September of 1941, and Marie in "Satan's Seven Swords-men," October of 1941.

THE relationship between Nita and Wentworth or "Dick" as she liked to call him, was examined throughout the entire series, and is well known to avid readers as going far beyond the platonic. There were remarks such as: "We can't marry because you're so wild, old boy," to this dramatic exchange from "The Mayor of Hell," January of 1936. Here we see the lob ebb of her faith washing ashore after being severely wounded.

Nita: "Dick, I don't often speak like this. But years are passing, lover. We are not getting younger. There's gray in your hair, above your temples."

Wentworth: "It's hard enough, Nita. Don't please, make it more so."

Nita: "But I want to make it hard. I want to make it so hard that you'll--Dick. Dick lover, don't you love me anymore?"

Wentworth: "We can't. Nita, dear, we've fought this over many times. How could we be happy knowing

that we stole our happiness from others? It's not vanity, but there is no other man who can do the things I do, who can stop those fiends who forever rise to prey on humanity. If we took our happiness at the cost of others--"

Nita: "Don't be proud."

Wentworth: "Do you think the police can combat the new menace even now arising? Do you think anyone with the forces of law can strike as does The Spider?"

Nita: "Then you won't promise, Dick? Not even for my sake? Not even to keep Kirkpatrick from breaking his heart over you? He loves you, Dick. He is doing this for your own good."

Wentworth: "Dearest I cannot."

Nita: "All right, Dick, then this is the end." (A short time later Nita tries to kill herself, but Wentworth knocks the weapon from her hand in time and escapes.)

In "Hordes of the Red Butcher," after Wentworth had been sentenced to death and locked away in Sing Sing prison, Nita meets with Jackson and Ram Singh. She outlines her moves.

"Do you like my plan, Jackson?"

"I did not know you could think such things."

"As torturing a criminal to save Dick? I would kill a dozen men, and you and me, too, to save him."

What it all comes down to is this: "She knew how both of them had fought their love because the Spider could never marry. How could he and Nita ever build a house, have a family, when he knew not what day the police would slap vengeful hands upon his shoulders and send him to his death?" In the final analysis, Nita takes the pledge of service with which the Spider had bound himself. It was their only pleasure that they fought side by side through death and horror.

They were almost married in

"Slaves of the Murder Syndicate," February of 1936, in the Little Church Around the Corner. It was no elaborate wedding, but Commissioner Kirkpatrick had to put the Police Reserves around the church. The Rector was just beginning the ceremony when a man shouted Kirkpatrick's name. It seemed the mayor had been murdered by a former adversary of the Spider known as The Fly. That, of course, ended everything as the call of battle summoned the Master of Men once again. "There will be no wedding after all," Nita smiled at the Rector. (Today or ever, her heart cried.)

In "The Devil's Paymaster," May of 1941, Nita tells Wentworth: "No wonder people think we are desanted! No shows, no night clubs. None of the things our set does. Just content to spend a quiet, almost conjugal, evening with a piano and a newspaper. The newspapers rarely tell of Richard Wentworth or Nita Van Sloan at Palm Beach--and it's such a blessed relief."

In "Scourge of the Yellow Fanga," April of 1937, they were to be married again and planned a trip to Europe, visiting Venice, the Bay of Naples, Tunis, Algiers, among other places.

Incidentally Nita's first beau was Frederick Stoking, a blond, handsome fellow, taller than Wentworth, with a superb figure, who used to "pull her pigtailed." He appeared in "Death Reign of the Vampire King," November of 1935.

But I still wonder how good a housewife Nita would have actually made. She always referred to her prowess in the kitchen with irony: "I sent Jenkins to bed," she once told Wentworth, "and we're going to mess up his kitchen."

Just for the records once during a journey in "The Cholera King," April of 1936, she was accompanied by a woman named Mrs. Robinson. (She was a gray-haired dowager). Wentworth employed her as a companion for Nita on rare occasions.

Obviously as the Spider's mate Nita went through hell much of the time. Here are a few examples: "Green Globes of Death," March of 1936, Wentworth believed she loved another and had betrayed him, thus both were sharply estranged.

"Dammed it, Nita, you played your part too well. Even I thought you had thrown in with The Fly."

In "The Cholera King," April of 1936, she had not been allowed to help Wentworth for "several months." But later on in order to save his life she offered herself to the villain in marriage.

In "Slaves of the Dragon," May of 1936, she told Wentworth: "Dick, I've sworn that you should never go into battle without me again."

In this particular novel there is related a fascinating sequence in which Nita was being whipped by a female guard: The lash cut across Nita's throat and breasts, hurled her backwards with its impact and pain. After that aingle gasp, Nita let herself show no evidence that the whip had hurt. She manages to snatch the whip and moments later shouts to the other female prisoners: "Follow me! Follow me to escape and freedom!" At the gate a eunuch held a rifle with a bayonet. Nita flung her laughter in his face. She was without fear, swept along by the tide of battle. Who was she to fear this weakling who was neither man nor woman? She was the Spider's mate! She knocked the bayonet aside with the butt of her whip, whirled the lash viciously with a continuation of the same movement.

Next, a huge Alsatian, larger than her own Great Dane, Apollo, leaped for her throat. She whipped the point of the bayonet across its neck. Once outside of the stockade she now faced six men: Nita threw herself prone on the ground. She thanked God now that the Spider had made her train so relentlessly with rifle and revolver. She had only five bullets in the clip. Calmly as on a target range, Nita opened fire.

In time five were dead. The sixth had fled into a nearby hut.

Her next problem--a man with a machine gun. She promptly shot him with a rifle she had snatched up from the ground. Following all of this she and the others still faced bombs and deadly cotton-mouth snakes and a swamp!

The novel "Legions of Madness," June of 1936, has Nita driven temporarily insane: "Dick," she whispered. "Dick...My brain!" He reached for her, but she dodged from under his hands. She sprang across the kitchen and her hand closed eagerly about a long, thin-bladed knife. As Wentworth rushed towards her, she whirled and struck out at him viciously. Only Wentworth's life of desperate action enabled him to dodge that strong, sure blow. She fought with all the savage cunning that the Spider had taught her, gnashing with her white, fine teeth and striking with her knees and the spikes of her heels. She was quite insane!

In "Laboratory of the Damned," July of 1936, she was injected with a cataleptic drug. She was severely injured in "When Thousands Slept in Hell," May of 1938. And then he found her--flung into the rear of the car. She was terribly wounded, but she still lived. Blood drenched her neck and shoulders, streaming down her arms, but her heart beat strongly, and a low moan gasped from her lips before she lapsed into unconsciousness.

In the novel, "The Spider and the Slaves of Hell," July of 1939, she became "The Black Widow," after scrawling a black silhouette of the Spider's seal upon the white shirt front of a dead man. "The Black Widow can sting too, Jackson," she said.

"You and the Master are two of a kind, Miss Nita," Jackson told her.

WE'VE touched only briefly on some of the incidents in Nita's life.

There were indeed others, some more serious--if that's possible. It was in "Fanga of the Dragon," August of 1942, that Nita declared to Wentworth: "From now on, Dick, we're going to be side-by-side in everything. I have a full duplicate of your outfit. I've been planning this for some time. There has never been a battle in which I did not, in varying degrees, share your danger. I have no life save this. That's not a compliment, Dick, but fact. Until the day when you can rack your guns for good, we can never marry. I have accepted that. You cannot deny me my full share in your life."

So it would be.

Prologue

She was indeed a lady worthy of the title, Queen of the Pulp. Picture her standing there on stage in a simple gown of French blue that showed the lovely contours of her shoulders and throat. Her evening wrap, flung lightly back, with a broad Chinese imperial robe of gold cloth. (Not my words, but taken from "Volunteer Corps Brigade," November of 1941.

Somehow still Nita Van Sloan always seemed beyond my reach as I read about her back in the Thirties. I was much closer and probably in love with Diane Elliot from Operator 5. I suspect deep down I knew I never had a chance with either of them. Yet no other female touched me quite like Nita Van Sloan. Not Nellie Gray, Pat Savage or R-1.

If this portrait has stirred your imagination enough to want to learn more about Nita and Richard Wentworth, and Jackson, and Commissioner Kirkpatrick, be on the lookout for Robert Sampson's book on The Spider. I've touched the surface while he prowls the depth and stirs with his mighty pen the cauldrons holding the Spider's life.

A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION

PETE RICE

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MAGAZINE

APRIL

THE BORDER SCOURGE
80 Page Novel



THE LAW IN TRINCHERA COUNTY

by

Link Hullar

"... a tall lean man sat before a crude table which he used as a desk. (He) was not handsome. Far from it. Countless battles had scarred his rugged, sun-bronzed face. He had an aggressive jaw. Hardship that was almost unceasing had engraved some grim lines in his face. The drawn flesh about the high cheek bones gave him a rather gaunt appearance. His hair was light, and string-straight. An unruly lock usually tumbled down over his forehead...every movement...had the grace of a stalking cougar, the sureness of a mountain-goat's footing. His shoulders were wide. His muscles crawled like snakes under silky brown skin. His fists were large and even-knuckled...He was dressed only a little better than an ordinary working cowboy. He wore a red shirt and a polka-dot neckerchief. A star was pinned on a bearskin vest. Around his slim waist was a cartridge belt. From this were suspended two cut-away, low-awung holsters tied to his lean thighs. The guns in these holsters were beauties. They were perfectly balanced weapons, silver-mounted, pearl-handled." (Pete Rice, 7/34, p.10)

This was how Sheriff Pistol Pete Rice was introduced to readers in the July, 1934 issue of Pete Rice Magazine. Pete Rice was the law in Trinchera County, Arizona. He made his headquarters in the county capital of Buzzard Gap but, along with his two deputies "Teeny" Butler and "Misery" Hicks, was known throughout the southwest as the scourge of the lawless. Pete's adventures were chronicled in the pulp magazines from 1933 into 1939. Pete Rice Magazine was a Street and Smith publication edited by John Nanovic. This explains Pete's strong ties to the hero or character pulps as these novels often have more in common with the

adventures of Doc Savage and the Avenger than they do the typical western story. The Pete Rice novels were written by Ben Conlon under the house name of Austin Gridley. The magazine began with the November 1933 issue (shortly after the successful launching of Doc Savage Magazine) and continued for thirty-two issues, concluding with the June 1936 issue. In September of 1935 the magazine underwent a title change to Pete Rice Western Adventures. Little changed at this point beyond the title, but minor alterations include a shortening of the lead novel (from around ninety pages to around sixty pages) and the inclusion of a couple of more fiction pieces. Also included in each issue was the "Pete Rice Club" feature with news and information for readers and club members. One could join the club by sending in one's name and address. However, a deputy emblem was ten cents extra. After the Pete Rice title came to an end in 1936, the sheriff's adventures were shortened to "novelette" length (around twenty-five pages) and became an irregular feature in Street and Smith's Wild West Weekly (one of the finest of all western pulps). Various authors shared the "Austin Gridley" house name during Pete's run in Wild West Weekly including Ben Conlon and Laurence Donovan (The Skipper, The Whisperer, and others). There were nineteen adventures featuring the Buzzard Gap hero in Wild West Weekly with the first showing up in the June 6, 1936 issue and the last outing in the April 22, 1939 installment of that title. These short stories included a few "cross-over" adventures with other Wild West Weekly heroes such as Sonny Tabor and Billy West. The short stories (or novelettes) were good but lacked the driving force and development of the novel length adventures. If one already knew Pete Rice from the novels than the short pieces held up much better. In any event, Pete Rice had a distinguished run as a pulp hero. Not only were the novels well

written, exciting pieces of action, adventure, and mystery, but the character development was very nicely done as well. After a novel or two, the reader genuinely came to like Pete and his two deputies (something that cannot be said for many of the pulp series).

In addition to the above average writing enjoyed by this series was the superior cover art of the one and only Walter M. Baumhofer. Mr. Baumhofer's magnificent paintings brought Pete Rice to life from the first issue through October 1935; twenty-four stirring cover illustrations. The quality of Mr. Baumhofer's work goes far beyond that of the average pulp artist. While there were many capable illustrators and some very talented artists among the ranks of the pulpsters, few were the equal of Walter M. Baumhofer. As with his Doc Savage covers, Mr. Baumhofer created "the" Pete Rice image; his interpretation is the definitive one with all other pale by comparison. The Baumhofer covers capture the essence of the sheriff's character and being. These cover paintings draw one to them; demanding attention to the artwork and then, hopefully, the stories. It might only be coincidence but only eight issues after Mr. Baumhofer stopped painting the covers for this publication the title folded. (More recently we might recall what happened to Bantam's Doc Savage sales after James Bama left the series.) For whatever reason, the stirring Baumhofer covers were replaced with the very capable artwork of R.G. Harris (whose style often resembles that of Walter Baumhofer). Harris's covers were very good and followed the pattern established by Mr. Baumhofer. However, the Pete Rice covers, like the Doc Savage covers he was painting at the same time, were never the same after Mr. Baumhofer left the title. The interior illustrations were few but were by a competent illustrator named C. Roemer (there may be others as well).

The striking artwork of Walter M. Baumhofer might have attracted the idle browser to this title and excited the reader's imaginations but it was the characters and stories that ultimately decided the fate of a pulp magazine. Pete Rice Magazine had excellent characters and stories.

Sheriff "Pistol Pete" Rice of Buzzard Gap, Trinchera County, Arizona was not a typical western lawman. Nor were his adventures typical of those found in the pulp western magazines. Pete's ties (and origins) were closer to the hero or character pulp line of magazines and while there was plenty of western action throughout the novels, complete with blazing six guns and savage fist fights, there was also a strong emphasis on mystery in these adventures with the sheriff serving as a very capable detective. Another interesting feature of the Pete Rice stories was that they took place in the "modern" west (a popular device of the B-western movie). The reader may well encounter airplanes, automobiles, telephones and other examples of twentieth century technology in these western tales. However, Buzzard Gap was a long way from New York City and the horse was still king in Trinchera County. In fact, often times the contemporary setting was downplayed without mention being made of any item not to be found in the "old" west. Other adventures would not have been possible without the trapping of the "new" west as in "Sinister Trail" (PR 12/35) which began with a plane crash and eventually had Pete take off for Chicago (by plane) to track down a murderer (whom he eventually follows back to Trinchera County by plane once again). Pete Rice was hardly a typical western hero. His adventures were different and exciting, made even more so by the characters that fill the pages.

Pete was a tall, lanky individual of about one hundred and eighty



pounds. He had "smokey-gray" eyes. Sheriff Rice dress "usually consisted of a red shirt, a dotted white neckerchief, stetson, vest, whipcord breeches, chaps, boots, and holsters..." (PR 5/34, p.84) His pistols were silver-mounted .45s with his initials insaid in pearl on the butts. Extremely accurate with his six guns, Pete preferred not to take a life when he could avoid it, often resorting to other means such as his lariat when possible. While there were ample opportunities in these adventures for the lawman to show off his skill with his pistols, many of his conflicts were resolved through bloody battles with fists (elbows, knees, chairs, bottles and any other available item). The sheriff of Trinchera County was tough but he was not cruel. In on adventure readers looked on as he surveyed the bodies of fallen outlaws, "...Pistol Pete never viewed sights like these without pangs of futility and grief. A

soft heart throbbed in his hard body. Most of the dead bandits had lived less than thirty years; some of them had mothers somewhere. Pete thought of his own gray-haired, sweet-faced mother back in Buzzard Gap." **Yes, Pete Rice had a very human side to him that readers came to appreciate. As indicated in the previous quote not only did the sheriff have a soft spot for those who died in their brushes with the law, but he dearly loved his mother. Pete lived with his mother on the outskirts of Buzzard Gap along with his dog named Vulcan (an English mastiff who appeared in some stories). Sheriff Rice was an easy-going, home-loving fellow whose main interests in life were the law and his mother. Surely Pete's mother took priority but the law was a close second. Like most pulp heroes, Pete, even though a sheriff, often operated outside proper legal channels. "Some persons even said that at time his methods

were a trifle illegal. But no one ever said that they were not just." (PR, 5/34. p.17 & **p.15)

Other aspects of Pete Rice's presence in the pages of these western adventures included his chewing gum, his injuries, and his faithful horse. Pete's only striking habit was that he seemed to chew gum almost constantly. Since he does not drink strong liquor (only "sarsaparilla") one can assume that the chewing gum was his only major vice. As with Doc's trilling, Pete chewed his gum more vigorously when thinking; that is, in moments of mental stress, when ideas and plans were taking shape.

Some comment must be made here concerning the sheriff's constant stream of minor injuries. In each adventure he is shot, cut, knocked senseless, battered, creased, grazed --- you name it, any one or, more likely, a combination of several of these things would happen to Pete in the course of a novel. The Buzzard Gap hero was always able to overcome these set-backs but rarely did a conflict pass without his sustaining some minor wound. Of course, what western hero does not have his true pal and companion, the horse. Pete Rice's horse was a powerful, magnificent sorrel named Sonny. "He seemed almost human in intelligence. Pete called him his 'four-legged deputy'. In the center of his forehead was a

star-shaped blotch of white. 'Sonny's badge of office' Pete called this." (PR, 5/34, p.12) Pete and Sonny did not fight crime alone in Arizona however, they were assisted by two able deputies.

The sheriff's two friends and deputies were Lawrence Michael "Misery" Hicks and William Alamo "Teeny" Butler. "Misery" Hicks was a short,

scrawny little man with Irish blue eyes who weighed in at around one hundred and twenty pounds. A determined, fearless, and sometimes reckless fighter. Misery was also the barber in Buzzard Gap. (In fact, Pete Rice's office was located in



the back of Misery's barber shop.) An excellent barber, Misery also did a little "doctoring" on the side and could often cure minor "miseries" for the local population. Hence the nickname "Misery". This barber/deputy rode a scrawny little strawberry roan and used his "bolas" (three rawhide thongs weighted with metal balls) to bring down his outlaw adversaries when possible. However, his skill with the six shooter was not to be taken lightly. All six feet four inches and three hundred pounds of "Teeny" Butler were dedicated to up-holding the law (and eating). Obviously, his nickname is a joking reference to his immense size. Teeny had been born in Texas and while he too was handy with his

six guns, he preferred to use his trusty "bullwhack" in order to preserve human life. He was an expert with this bull whip and could disarm, knock unconscious, or otherwise dispose of an opponent with this weapon. Equally as courageous as Misery, Teeny was capable of much better judgement than the excitable little deputy. His horse was a big blood bay. (for an outstanding look at Pete and his deputies, readers are referred to Walter M. Baumhofer's cover painting for the July 1934 issue of Pete Rice Magazine.) While Pete's associates did not play as large a role in these adventures as some pulp heroes they remained strong supporting characters and added color and variety to these novels and stories. Misery and Teeny shared the sheriffs adventures in the modern west of Arizona.

Pete Rice and his deputies were intent on their jobs. "Their job was to enforce the law. That was their life. It was a dangerous life, an active one, a hard one. But they would not have had it otherwise. While they lived, law would reign supreme." (PR, 5/34, p.96) Although they were tough, hardened lawmen, their passion for the law did not overcome their humanity. As Pete put it, "What mankind needs most is mercy. Justice would annihilate two-thirds o' them." (PR, 5/34, p.41) Action, adventure, mystery and even a little humor went into the Pete Rice Magazine. These were top-notch novels in the best traditions of the hero and western pulps. Pete Rice was a memorable character, and furthermore, he was the law in Trinchera County.

THE END***

*** I hope that this little article was at least half as much fun to read as it was to write. The Pete Rice novels and stories were loads of fun to read and I hope that I am not along in looking forward to reading other Pete Rice adventures as I can find them. Please allow me a moment to point out that this piece does not pretend to be an exhaustive study of the magazine, character, or stories but rather is a general overview of these things. Every attempt was made to be as accurate as possible but I was only able to read and research through a handful of the novels and stories so that the possibility for error is indeed present as far as technical details are concerned. I must offer sincere thanks to a few folks without whom there would have been no article. Will Murray generously provided me with information about the Pete Rice Magazine and novelettes which is included in this piece. Lester Belcher and Albert Tonik provided the magazines themselves that I used to read and research this article. One man provided information and inspiration far beyond what he would admit to and that is Frank Hamilton. In fact, it was Frank's terrific Pete Rice illo on the cover of Pulp #12 that originally attracted me to this character. From there Walter Baumhofer's magnificent covers would never let my mind stray too far from Pete Rice. Eventually I turned to reading the novels and from there we have this article. My thanks to those mentioned above. Credit for many of this piece's virtues must lie with them. Blame for its vices must rest with me.

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Shadow

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1933
MAGAZINE
TWICE A MONTH

The
**DEATH
GIVER**



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THE MAN WITH THE SHADOW'S FACE

by
Will Murray

His was one of the most famous faces in American literature. It stared out from the covers of literally hundreds of pulp magazines, was caricatured in comic books, and floated in the imaginations of millions as they listened to the radio every Sunday night.

Even shaded by the brim of the familiar slouch hat, the lower part of his face hidden behind the high scarlet collar of an all-concealing black cloak, it was an unforgettable profile---strong, intensely masculine, forbidding and unforgettable. It was too dynamic to be just a face. It was a countenance, a mien: It was the distinctive visage of The Shadow!

The Shadow was known by many names: Henry Arnaud, Theo D. Shaw, Lamont Cranston, and his true identi-

ty, Kent Allard. Many people played the role over the years: Orson Welles, William Johnstone, and Bret Morrison on radio, Rod LaRocque and Victor Jory on the silver screen. Some people like to think of Walter B. Gibson, who created the character and wrote most of the 325 novels published in The Shadow Magazine bylined "Maxwell Grant," as The Shadow. But only one man wore The Shadow's true face.

His name is William Magner. He was a silent film-era feature player who turned professional artist's model in 1920. It was in this capacity that he first went to work for George Rozen, who became cover artist for Street & Smith's phenomenally successful Shadow Magazine in 1931 when his twin brother, Jerome, had to relinquish that duty after an incapacitating auto accident.

At that time, Walter Gibson and Street & Smith were still developing



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the character and searching for a recognizable Shadow "look." It was eventually decided that The Shadow should have an instantly recognizable profile, something like Sherlock Holmes'. Gibson called it "hawklike," and legend has that it was inspired by the rather pronounced aquiline nose of S&S art director Bill Lawler. Lawler, they say, sometimes posed for Rozen right there in the S&S offices, using a floppy hat and cape kept handy for emergencies. But pulp cover artists did most of their work at their studios, not in art director's offices.

Still, Lawler seems to have been used as Rozen's model in those very early days. Rozen's first Shadow cover, dated January 1932, inexplicably showing a hooded Shadow, may be a portrait of Lawler, as were some other early depictions. As late as 1937, Lawler's photograph appeared on a cover intended to tie in with the Rod LaRocque-starring feature, The Shadow Strikes. To this day, most people still believe it's LaRocque on that cover.

But somewhere along the line, probably by 1933 at the latest, George Rozen hired a model of his own. He was William Wagner, by then a very busy artists model whose face was nearly perfect. He had an intense face, frightening, almost evil. Piercing blue eyes peered out from under bushy black brows. True, he was balding, but The Shadow never appeared on the cover of his own magazine without benefit of headgear, so that minor imperfection was immaterial.

And best of all---from an artist's standpoint anyway---Wagner possessed wonderfully articulated fingers. Any painter will tell you that hands are exceedingly difficult to capture on canvas. Whether because it had been a cover motif before Wagner came along, or was directly inspired by those impressive digits, Rozen painted many, many Shadow covers in which The Shadow's hands, set off by a mystic fire opal ring, dominated the scene. His face wasn't even shown. Those hands were enough. The one big drawback was Wagner's nose. It was large, pronounced, with appropriately flaring nos-



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trils, but it lacked the famous hawk-like hook. So Rozen simply exaggerated it too much and The Shadow's profile became a parody of itself. With two issues of The Shadow coming out each month, no one was likely to notice the variation much. They were too busy reading.

Rozen scoured second-hand shops for an appropriate slouch hat. The famous cloak was a dress cape belonging to Rozen's wife, Ellen who often appeared on Shadow covers herself.

The slouch hat is now the proud possession of DC colorist Anthony Tollin, a gift from Jerome Rozen, George died in 1973.

Without doubt, William Wagner modeled for the overwhelming majority of Shadow covers during the classic period of the magazine, which is to say, the Depression. A rough estimate would indicate that Wagner's face, profile, or hands were depicted on about 150 separate covers. When Rozen lost the Shadow contract in 1939, Wagner was probably just as happy to hang up his cloak and hat for good.

But that was not to be. As it happened, that same year, artist Rafael de Soto replaced Roger Newton Howitt on the covers of The Shadow's chief rival and imitator, The Spider. Most of the New York pulp illustrators knew each other, and frequently posed for one another. They also shared models. De Soto, suddenly saddled with the lucrative job of painting The Spider every month, hired Wagner for the job.

The Spider dressed much like The Shadow--black suits, cloaks, and floppy hats. In the novels, these were augmented by a fright wig and vampire fangs designed to transform millionaire Richard Wentworth into a truly terrifying figure. But Popular Publications deemed



this Halloween visage too extreme for the covers, so the artists were instructed to simply suggest the longish hair, coarsen the features, and add a black domino mask for a mysterious effect.

De Soto did just that, although there was a very brief period in 1940 when he experimented and portrayed the real Spider on the covers. That lasted all of three or four issues. But for the most part, he painted Wagner in strokes so broad that even in a slouch hat and cloak, no reader ever suspected that the face of The

Spider was also the face of The Shadow. One reason was that de Soto painted Wagner's nose as it truly was. For another, The Shadow's mouth was always hidden; The Spider's was invariably set in a tight grimace, if not a snarl.

There was more variety in working for de Soto, Wagner found. Because he wasn't tied down to one twice-a-month magazine contract, de Soto put Wagner's already-overexposed countenance on an incredible variety of pulp covers. In a pith helmet and jodhpurs, he looked manly on the



covers of Adventure. With his bald pate showing, he would be a murderer or a murder victim in Dime Detective. He graced many a Black Mask cover during the Forties, too. In a long, stringy wig, syringe in hand, he became a Terror Tales mad scientist. Probably the most striking pulp cover Wagner ever graced was a Strange Detective Mysteries cover from the early 40s (3/43) painted by Rafael de Soto. It showed an invisible bank robber pausing before a wanted poster of himself. The poster shows front and profile views, and they are, for once, the exact likeness of William Wagner. The clever thing about the composition is that the invisible robber is posed so that the front view of the wanted poster occupies the approximate position of his invisible head. It's a stunning cover by itself, and even more fascinating for the two views of Wagner's visage.

William Wagner stayed with de Soto even after The Spider was cancelled in 1943, and even beyond the pulp magazine era. When de Soto made a very successful switch to painting paperback covers, Wagner appeared on those, too. The accompanying photographs of William Wagner were taken during the Forties by Rafael de Soto and other artists, who used them as painting guides. They show Wagner as he was just a few years after he was the principal model for The Shadow and in his mid-forties.

Today he is 89 and living in New York, his slouch hat and .45 automatic days far behind him. "I think I was the original Shadow," he says of those days. "I started working in silent pictures and I went into posing because it was more steady. I worked in the first picture that Warner Brothers made, The Fighting Roosevelts. I played Archibald, one of the sons. I think that was in 1918 or '19." Wagner was also featured in Lewis J. Selznik's first film, A Woman God Sent, starring Zena Keefe. Among his friends from his three-year acting career were Neil Hamilton and Adolph Menjou. "I dan-

ced with Billie Burke in a picture once," he recalls fondly.

When the New York studios migrated to Hollywood around 1920, he was hired to pose by artist Clarence Underwood, then painting cover of Cosmopolitan. Over the years, he modeled for an incredible variety of artists from Charles Dana Gibson to Edward Dalton, who as Dalton Stevens painted most of the covers to Master Detective and True Detective. Wagner appeared on almost every cover.

One of his fellow models was aspiring actor Fredric March. Another was a woman named Mildred Gillaris. They were working in the same artist's studio when she received an offer to work in Germany. After World War II, when the notorious "Axis Sally" was arrested and tried for treason, Wagner recognized the face in the newspapers as Mildred Gillaris.

Once, Wagner posed for the Elery Queen story, Death Counts Five, which was inspired by the notorious "Three X" killer of Queens, N.Y., and when another artist copied his face in Heart's Saturday Journal, claiming it was his "conception" of "Three X's" face. Wagner contemplated suing Heart because, he says, "I live in Queens," but decided against it.

Why was he chosen by George Rozen for The Shadow? "I suppose it was because I have a sort of long, drawn face," he says. "Back in those days there weren't too many models around, maybe half a dozen. Modeling was hard work because you had to pose direct. They didn't take photographs until later. And I had a reputation because I had worked for so many men. I had a good face to draw from. It wasn't that I was handsome or anything, it was just the idea that I was very drawable." He was paid a flat dollar an hour and worked for so many artists at the same time, he was constantly traveling between studios.

Wagner doesn't recall very much of his Shadow posing days. In fact, he never kept any copies of the maga-

zine. "The Shadow Magazine was a ten-cent article and the others like Cosmopolitan, Women's Home Companion, Master Detective and True Detective were a quarter, and those were the ones I saved because they looked like me, you see, and Dalton Stevens spent so much time doing them. He didn't just knock them out."

In spite of his long association with The Shadow, no one ever came up to him on the street and asked if he were Lamont Cranston. But once a woman on the subway mistook him for Basil Rathbone. It's not surprising, then, to learn that he posed for a series of Sherlock Holmes paperback covers by Jack Faragasso. Despite his imposing appearance, Wagner characterizes himself as a very shy person.

These days, Wagner still sits for the occasional portrait, but not for commercial artists. "I can't take action poses at my age." While John F. Kennedy was president, noted artist William F. Draper was asked to do his portrait. Kennedy posed for the face, but William Wagner sat for the body. He also performed the same service when Draper painted Joseph P. Kennedy. "I've had an interesting life up to this point," Wagner says.

It should be mentioned that others took up The Shadow's guise after 1939. George Rozen was immediately succeeded by Graves Gladney. Gladney hired Wagner for his first Shadow painting, Death Ship (April 1, 1939), which showed Lamont Cranston's full face, even though he was cloaked as The Shadow. However, Gladney quickly discovered that his own rather pronounced features enabled him to dispense with the usual modeling fee. After using Wagner once or twice, Gladney painted his own face

as The Shadow's. At that time, roommates Edd Cartier and Earl Mayan alternated on the black-and-white interiors. Mayan inherited Bill Lawler's cloak and slouch hat, donned them for photographs and drew from those. Apparently Mayan had a hook nose, too. His stark illustrations are so intense they resemble high-contrast photos.

In 1941, George Rozen was welcomed back into the Street & Smith corporate bosom and happily resumed painting Shadow covers. Because William Wagner was too busy looking fierce on the covers of The Spider, Rozen had to hire a new model. He was an Englishman named Al Drake. Drake was an ex-ironworker and bartender turned artist. He did covers for Popular Publications. But he also modeled. Wagner knew him well, but other than the fact that they both had brown hair and blue eyes, says, "Al looked entirely different from me." Drake didn't have the hawklike nose, either. But by this time pulp covers styles had changed enough that it didn't matter. Most of the time, Rozen painted a full-figure Shadow in an action pose, so the famous profile was underplayed.

George Rozen again departed Street & Smith in 1942, not to return until 1948, when he painted the final quartet of Shadow covers. His model at that time is unknown. Perhaps, after more than 200 Shadow portraits, he didn't need one, the fearsome visage leaping from his brush spontaneously. If he did paint those final covers from memory, there's no doubt whose face inspired him. It had to be the face of William Wagner--the true face of The Shadow.

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THE BEST IN SCIENCE-FANTASY FICTION

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ADVENTURE



YOU RED-HEADED GIRL OF MY DREAMS

by

Robert Sampson

Soothing quiet in the Valley of Marc's Mind. Among trees oddly feathery hangs a fragile blue mist. The sky is without sun, yet the sky shines. The odd trees circle a little clearing, coolly carpeted with moss. And on the moss, relaxed, happy, sprawls Marcus George Pillsworth.

He is unconscious.

Well, you must understand, he is awake in the Valley of his own mind. But to get to that valley--if the concept is not too difficult--he must first be unconscious. Knocked cold or asleep in our stormy world.

In the Elyrian deeps of his own mind, however, he stretches upon the moss, calmly smiling.

At which point...

"...two cool hands pressed down gently over his eyes and two lips closed simultaneously over his mouth. The lips were not nearly so cool or so gentle as the hands, and they went directly to the business of kissing him with an air of abandon and authority."

The authoritative kisser is a girl named Toffee. In this quiet place, down in Marc Pillsworth's subconscious, she waits for him. She is formed from his wishes and thoughts and she glows warmly.

To put matter exactly, she is buxom, red-headed wench. Since the weather of the mind is mild, she wears only a filmy, fragile, transparent scrap of emerald-colored stuff. It keeps the dew off. In spite of this diaphanous wisp, you can see that she is extraordinarily beautiful, a full-bodied delight. Uninhibited. Pleasure-loving, you might say. Even shameless. Eager to kiss and hug and tickle...

The general idea is that she is not feminist. And Marc is her special darling. As indeed he should

be, since he thought her up.

Toffee: "All that I am I owe to you and, judging by the mirror, I'd say that was plenty. Up until now, I've existed only in your subconscious, but last night, while you were dreaming, you released me, gave me physical dimensions and a personality. Now that works both ways; it was the first chance I'd had to see you too. Well, it seemed that you were a nice enough guy, but a little mixed up about a lot of important things, so I decided to materialize myself and help you out."

Which is kind of her. But why she bothers with that inhibited stick, Marc, is hard to explain.

He recoils from her kisses. He shrinks from her hugs. He chatters rapidly of her nakedness. Yet the poor simp dreamed up this girlish glory. Surely he could think of something other than flight.

And no doubt he could, given a slight change of environment. But unfortunately, Marc and Toffee are stuck in a humorous fantasy series that began in the pulps. And most pulps got a little edgy when the heroine appeared dressed in a light mist and began nibbling the hero's neck.

Fantastic Adventures was quite careful about such scenes. The magazine's covers delighted in under-clothed, over-developed young ladies who never appeared to feel a draft. But it was a rare story that carried the cover's promise into words.

The Toffee series, written by Charles F. Myers, was no exception. The series includes seven stories published in Fantastic Adventures between 1947 and 1950. Later, Toffee moved to Imagination, Stories of Science and Fantasy, a digest-sized publication, during the early 1950s. Still later, a pair of stories were reprinted in Imaginative Tales, 1954.

In 1947, when Toffee first appeared, Fantastic Adventures was a big, solid pulp of 178 pages (includ-

ing the front cover). It cost 25 cents and was issued bi-monthly by Ziff-Davis. The Managing Editor, Raymond A. Palmer, was also responsible for Amazing Stories, and had created Fantastic Adventures as a "aister" magazine, stressing fantasy.(1) It began with a bias toward the musclemann hack and alash adventure, but before the mid-1940s it was drifting into the humorous, often cock-eyed fantasy. These were vigorous farces told in the vernacular, slangy and full of superficial characters and non-stop movement.

The Toffee series fit right in.

The first appearance was the short story, "I'll Dream of You" (January 1947). It opens in Marc's mind, and away we go:

Toffee (Hugging Marc's neck): "You seem fascinated by beauty, almost starved for it."

Marc (Looking dreamily off into the distance, nods).

Toffee: "Then get fascinated, you dope...I'm beautiful too and twice as much fun. Kiss me."

Marc: "Haven't you any restraint?"

Toffee: "With everything else I have, you ask for restraint."

Marc: "You're shameless."

Toffee: "Naturally."

At this point, more or less, Marc wakes from a sound sleep, finds himself in his bedroom, the alarm clock jangling. A day beginning like all other days. Except that Toffee has followed him out of his dreams, dressed in her transparent fragment, and stands in his bedroom. She is warmly friendly.

A bachelor finding an uninhibited, unclothed young lady in his bedroom promptly thinks of ways to get her dressed. This explains how Toffee, in a dressing gown, and Marc, in icy sweat, end up at a Ladies Ready-To-Wear store. There, Toffee climbs into a display window to insert herself into a black evening gown--to the fascination of those

outside the window. Marc lunges into the window, tries to shield her from the public gaze, and make her give up the evening dress.

Girl (Observing from the sidewalk): "Just like my Oscar. No sense of time and place."

From this public spectacle, Marc biunders off to his office, Toffee smiling and glittering behind. Marc is the owner of the Pillsworth Advertising Agency. His staff is highly exercised at the sight of the boss coming in at noon, escorting a red-headed dream in an evening dress.

They are not so interested as Julie Mason, Marc's chilly blond secretary. She has certain quiet plans for Marc, herself, and Toffee's appearance sends her temper flaring.

That evening, Marc and Toffee accidentally meet Julie and her date at a night club. Attempting to patch things up, Marc sends Toffee off to dance with the date. He remains behind to gaze deeply into Julie's eyes.

Now, as it happens, Toffee, being a dream girl, is slightly insubstantial. When Marc sleeps, she vanishes. When Marc day-dreams, she fades away. Thus, when Marc sits at the night-club table day dreaming about life with Julie, Toffee fades silently from the arms of her dancing companion. Through a series of complicated reactions, this causes a small riot. Everyone gets arrested, and Toffee and Marc make the first of their many appearances before a judge.

After a night in jail, they return to Marc's apartment. There Julie waits for him. She wishes to resign her job. Instead, Marc proposes marriage to her and is accepted.

But what is he to do with Toffee?

He had discovered that she appeared, as a coherent dream image, after he had eaten Welsh Rarebit. So out they go to eat rarebit again.

That, combined with a dose of sleeping pills, returns Toffee to the Valley of Marc's mind.

She is philosophical about her banishment. "I've served my purpose and it's a time for me to return," she tells him. And so they part. And that, we may suppose, is the end of it.

But it isn't.

In "You Can't Scare Me" (March 1947), Toffee reappears when Marc needs her peculiar sort of help. He has married Julie, who seems short on common sense and long on jealousy. The plans for an advertising account have been stolen from him, threatening the agency. Toffee, eager to help, leaps into this mess and quickly plunges Marc from hot to scalding to boiling water. Soon a highly compromising photograph is made of him with Toffee. Clearly his world is becoming unglued. But after a novelette of dizzy complications, all trouble melts away.

Toffee hasn't changed. But Julie has. From a cool, blonde secretary, she has become that rather different thing, a cool, blonde wife. Simmering with jealousy, inflexible, stuffy, snobbish, she rages across the scene, her mouth an icy line. She finds a semi-naked girl (Toffee) in Marc's office, and a naked girl (Toffee) in his bedroom, and surprises him being hugged by a vivacious young thing (Toffee), and her heart aches with discontent.

In future stories, she will howl for divorce. She will storm out, slamming the door. She will teeter at the edge of indiscretion. She will grit her teeth and bring in the psychiatrist or the lawyer.

These emotional storms rage through each story. But at the end, Julie and Marc make up, shedding large drops of sugar water. Don't blame Julie for the way she behaves. She knows better. Only she has the thankless job of a supporting role in a farce. Meaning that she is given no inner coherence. Her function is to complicate the plot and provide

tension.

But who cares? It's only cheap fiction.

"Toffee Takes A Trip," novelette July 1947. Vacationing alone at the beach, Marc finds himself saddled with a murdered corpse. Toffee comes to his aid, generating chaos. The sheriff chases them; so does a deadly little man with a gun. Presently, they are taken prisoner by a scientific gang that threatens to blow up the world, unless they are paid off.

Toffee and Marc escape the gang, only to be arrested. Then they escape from jail, accompanied by a drunken plumber. After lunatic adventures, they blunder back to the gang's hideout. The police crash in; the hideout is blown up--rather than the world--because Toffee had accidentally reversed the deadly beam.

The author of these excitements, Charles F. Myers, was then in his mid-twenties. He was born in San Joaquin Valley, California, in 1922. He began writing while in the Army, when he prepared some special material for an USO show. He thought up Toffee during a "dateless Saturday night in a deserted barracks." (2)

In his thinking, he was mightily helped by the novels of Thorne Smith, most of these available to servicemen in Armed Forces paperback editions.

Myers' debt to Thorne Smith is immediate and unashamed. Readers of Fantastic Adventures wrote asking if Myers were not Smith. It was hard to tell, for Myers wrote a clever pastiche of Smith's style--with certain differences.

Thorne Smith (1893-1934), author of about a dozen humorous novels, was born at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. His father supervised the Port of New York during the First World War. After graduation from college, Smith worked at an advertising agency until the First World War, then enlisted in the Navy. While in service, he wrote his first book. During the 1920s, he published a meager amount of fiction, having a

hungry time of it until the success of his 1926 novel, Topper. Afterward, he worked in Hollywood. Many of his books appeared as films. He died, forty years old, at Sarasota, Florida, leaving an unfinished novel, The Passionate Witch, later completed by Norman Matson; the book was published in 1941 and immediately became a moving picture.

Almost all Smith's novels are joyous farces. All contain the same central situation: An inhibited man chafes against the narrow conventionalities of his life. Suddenly fantastic elements burst around him. He meets ghosts or gods or witches; he becomes intermittently transparent or tumbles into another dimension. Bohemian conviviality reshapes his drab life. There is a great deal to drink, a beautiful aggressive woman, an assortment of demented companions, cheerfully amoral and full of bottled spirits.

All tumble through reeling adventures of riot and pursuit, nudity, falling-down confusion, underwear, conversations at cross purposes, dogs, bottles, and unrestrained bedlam. Social conventions are gleefully shattered. Also a good many laws and a few of the lesser commandments.

At the end, the hero is transformed. He has learned that repression and conventionality wither the heart, that there must be gaiety and play. There must also be love. His adventures may conclude with hang-over, but he has become a whole human being.

Such material worked as a novel. However, as fiction in a pulp magazine, which had a second-class mailing permit to defend, many of Smith's more gaudy ideas could not be used. Although Myers adopted Smith's prose tone, scenes, character types, and favorite adjectives, much more was dropped.

Almost entirely omitted is the two-fisted drinking of the Smith characters. These spend their days and nights surrounded by bottles and

having a high old time getting tight. And very frequently, Smith's people end in bed together--men and women; oh, the scandal--and the worst sometimes happens.

Only pallid reflections of these revels entered Fantastic Adventures. Now and then a flash from Smith's lusty heroines ignites in Toffee. But it is only a flash, like a single diamond from some elaborate necklace, now broken and scattered.

"Toffee crossed one lovely leg over the other and regarded it bleakly. Obviously, she thought it a waste in such scientific surroundings. Her determined belief in the idea that sex, if just given half a chance, could surmount any obstacle, seemed in grave peril of disproof."

That belief might be true of a Thorne Smith heroine but is not really true of Toffee. Granted that she is quite aware of the notorious differences in the sexes; she is also aware of that precious second-class mailing permit. With the result that her heaviest passes at Marc are curiously dimmed:

Toffee had already twined her arms around his neck and was kissing him. Finally she let him go.

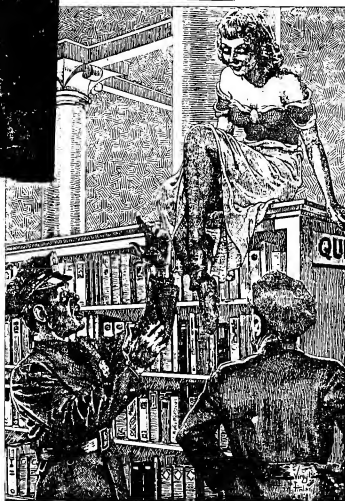
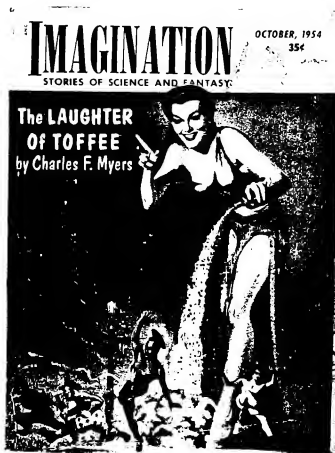
"You'll never change, do you," Marc said shortly.

"Never," Toffee said. "Isn't it delightful? I know a game that's fun. We take turns..."

But what they are to take turns at is never explained.

In one matter, at least, Toffee remains close to her Thorne Smith originals. She is unable to keep her clothing on. Toffee's customary condition is close enough to nudity as to make no difference:

...Toffee stepped out, a wayward vision in a black lace negligee. The garment, inspired by the peek-a-boo idea, had been translated by Toffee's lovely figure into a wide open stare. In terms of visibility, the ceiling



Toffee smiled amicably from her perch as he glared at the gentleman at the top genuine noddy . . .

was practically unlimited.

"Good night," (Marc) said. "Did you have to pick that? It's a darn near the nakedest thing I've seen. It's indecent."

"Thanks," said Toffee sweetly. "I knew you'd like it." She fell into a languorous pose beside the door. "By the way, what is the nakedest thing you've seen? It might be interesting to know."

"You and your evil mind," Marc sneered. "Anyway, we don't have time for that. We've got to get out of here."

What on earth ails the man. After all, she is his dream girl. Surely he could spare her a sidelong glance or a tender word. In this form of comic novel, however, normal sexual roles are reversed: the woman pursues, the man flees, timorous as a young deer, his melting brown eyes amazed.

In Thorne Smith's novels, the man is reluctant because social conventions have smothered his outgoing impulses. In Myers's stories, Marc is reluctant because that is a comic device. And because it is a comic device, not a personality trait, Marc does not develop as a feeling character until the final story of the series. Until that time, he remains a six-foot, two-inch caricature, cold at the heart, whose feeling toward the girl of his dreams are almost always annoyance. Myers has copied Thorne Smith's form, but the Thorne Smith substance eludes him.

By the July 1947 novelette, the series' story format is well developed. Marc faces a disagreeable problem. Toffee seeks to help him, creating even worse problems. They chase wildly about, spreading confusion and disorder. Wherever they appear, a riot explodes.

As at the old folks' home....

"(The old folks) were magically transformed into a league of formidable warriors...no longer the slowly

disintegrating remnants they had first appeared to be. Summoning hidden vigor, from heaven only knew what source, they rose as a body and swarmed toward the scene of outrage. One of their number had been attacked and they were plainly not to be found wanting. Crutches, ear trumpets and miscellaneous silverware were instantly pressed into service in lieu of weapons. One old gentleman, racing his wheelchair at break-neck speed, hurled himself into the fray with all the proud spirit of a knight astride a charger. Other ancient enlistees, in their near-sightedness, promptly engaged each other in ferocious battle. Crockery flew in all directions and crashed unheeded against the walls. The orderly dining room was reduced to a raging ruin in only a matter of seconds."

Two or three of these explosions occur per story. As a result, Marc and Toffee frequently find themselves arrested. Hauled before a judge, they hear him cite an extended list of their transgressions:

Judge: "Now, taking it from the beginning, your...crimes, since only this morning, include possession of lewd pictures, jail breaking, destruction of private property, resisting arrest, disturbing the peace, assaulting seven officers, collusion in an automobile theft, lewd and immoral conduct, two attempts at murder, harboring criminals and, now, grand larceny and perhaps an insurance swindle. That's just hitting the high spots."

Eventually, when the story is long enough, coincidence or author intervention blows out all problems. Toffee fades away to the Valley of Marc's Mind, and Marc is, once again, reconciled with Julie. Until the next time.

Two new characters join the series during the novelette "Toffee Haunts A Ghost" (November 1947). The

first character is Memphis McGuire, a sensible fat girl, who occupies a minor role as Marc's new secretary; Memphis has considerable comic potential, but there is so much going on that her talents are not used.

The second character introduced is a major figure. His name is George and he is the ghost of Marc Pillsworth. A hard-drinking entity, capable of infinite disruption, George is patterned after George Kirby of Smith's Topper series.

After encountering several near-fatal accidents, Marc arrives at his office to find it haunted by the ghost of himself, swilling whiskey and chasing girls. The ghost, who looks exactly like Marc, has been sent by the Spirit High Council to determine if Marc is still alive.

But although Marc lives, George enjoys the mortal world so much that he does not want to leave.

In the company of Toffee and George, Marc sets out on more wild adventure. They meet a moonshiner and a pair of ineffectual robbers. They drink too much moonshine and chase and get chased and cause a riot in an old folks' home. By then, George has plotted with the robbers to kill Marc, so that George can remain on Earth. But this dire plot fails. Eventually, George returns to Spiritland, and quiet settles. Quiet for an entire year--which is how long Toffee is absent from the magazine.

She returns in the November 1948 issue, the novelette being titled "The Spirit of Toffee," a glorious bubbling whirl.

Julie seeks a career as a musical comedy star, Marc footing the bill. The cost of supporting a Broadway production has almost bankrupted him. Thus the problem. After which Marc is knocked out in a car accident and, behold, Toffee returns.

So does George, the hard-drinking ghost.

The Spirit High Council, mightily annoyed by George's last visit to Earth, has sent him back to do Marc a good turn. Thus making up for that

last time. Since Marc needs money, George proceeds to get it for him--by robbing a bank. And away the money bags float, gripped by invisible hands. Followed by the usual wild chase, ending in a traffic jam that is immediately converted to a full-scale riot, as Marc and a partially dressed Toffee chase the floating money bags in and out of automobiles.

In the company of a fascinated cab-driver, Marc and Toffee proceed, through compounding confusion, to the riot at the movie, the riot at the diner. At last they reach the theatre where Julie is about to debut.

Toffee wanders out on stage during Julie's solo and proceeds to get undressed. That results in the theatre riot, after which they are all arrested.

At this point, George does his good turn. Since he looks exactly like Marc, he has no trouble confusing all witnesses. The charges die. Or rather, they collapse, after George also demonstrates how easy it is to float up into the air and remove your head.

One byproduct of this interesting event is a conversation between two courtroom photographers. It is the pure essence of Thorne Smith:

...one of the photographers nearest this dreadful scene (George floating headless) turned to another of his kind.

"You know, Harry," he said in a controlled voice, "I've been thinking. You and me, we've been in this racket an awful long time now."

"Yeah," said Harry. "An awful long time."

"Yeah. And maybe too long. It's no kind of life for a man with any kind of sensitivity, you know. It's liable to take a bad effect on a guy after a while."

"I know what you mean," Harry said thoughtfully. "You get around too much, see too many screwy things. It might begin to give you a sort of distorted view, like."

"Sure. It could even get so bad

you could get kind of unbalanced. Maybe it would start with you seein' things that aren't real."

"Uh-huh," Harry nodded. "Maybe like guys floatin' around in the air without they're got their heads on. Or something like that. Not that I've ever seen no such thing, mind you... What say we get the hell out of here."

Even after George returns to the spirit world, events in Marc Pillsworth's life remain unstable. In "Toffee Turns The Trick" (February 1949, novelette), another magical gimmick shows up. It's pills--pills that can make you very young or very old. Both Marc and Toffee get a large dose. So do two criminals who are hot after the pill formula.

During this adventure, Marc, Toffee, and the pill inventor all get tight and remain tight. It seems that whiskey is the only fluid to counteract the pill's effect. This varies the device used in Smith's novel, The Passionate Witch, where large amounts of whiskey are required to rid the hero of voices in his head.

For a Thorne Smith imitator, Myers uses little drinking in his stories. Toffee is not adverse of a nice bottle of champagne or a good portion of moonshine, but she doesn't go panting after a drink. Nor does Marc.

George does. Ghost or not, he is a dedicated swiller, lured by any bottle. Since he is usually invisible, his quest for drink often has unpredictable results:

"There's nothing like whiskey to open the mind and the pores so the poison can get out," Jewel announced loudly. "It's a wonderful stuff."

It was just at this moment that the invisible George drifted expectantly into the room. He stopped short and pricked up his ears. Whiskey! The very thing he was looking for, and here were mortals fairly wallowing in the stuff. Then he noticed

Julie's glass languishing on the table.

...He waited till the turret-faced matron was looking in his direction, then lifted the glass with a broad flourish. Even to George the effect of the drink suddenly flying from the table and into the air seemed rather arresting...

"The glass!" Jewel blurted in tones of terror. "The glass!" Then suddenly she gulped and sat down again as the bottle, like the glass, leaped lightly from the table, upended itself over the glass, filled it, then replaced itself.

"The bottle! Jewel boomed.

"She wants the bottle," May told Julie. "God, what a thirst that woman's got! Did you see her knock off that drink? And now she's yelling for the bottle. She's fairly lusting for the stuff..."

It's Myers' story but the situation and language are pure Thorne Smith, old and rare.

The final Toffee to appear in Fantastic Adventures was a full-length novel, "The Shades of Toffee" (June 1950). It is nearly the best thing of the series, blithely reproducing much of the lunatic merriment you find in the Smith novels. Marc accidentally invents an anti-gravity formula and two ineffectual spies are out to steal it. Toffee spends much of the novel wearing nothing but her agreeable skin and the frenzy never slows.

For some reason which escapes the casual reader, the novel alters several character relationships. For this story only, Marc seems never to have met Toffee before; and George, bottle-hungry as ever, is visiting the Earth for the first time. At all other points, it is the familiar farce, expanded, magnified, delightful.

After this novel, Charles Myers published no other fiction in Fantastic Adventures. Almost a year later, another Toffee short novel cropped up

in Imagination, Stories of Science and Fantasy. Imagination was a thick, digest-sized magazine containing 162 pages (including the front cover) and costing 35 cents. The editor, William Lawrence Hamling, had just completed three-and-a-half years as Managing Editor of Fantastic Adventures.

In the editorial column of the February 1951 Imagination, Hamling remarked that "My own personal discovery, Charles F. Myers, is in this issue...with his hilarious dream-girl Toffee. We've very proud of Charles Myers, and intend to give you more stories from his talented pen in the near future." (3)

"The Vengeance of Toffee" Imagination, (February 1951) is an uneven piece scattered with funny scenes and dialogue. Unfortunately it begins from the basic premise that it is humorous to see someone get kicked in the seat of the pants.

Well, it's that simple and it isn't.

By mental projection or some such thing, Toffee has thought up a ring which projects a ray which, when focused on the bottom of the spine, causes the tissue and bones of the human body to stretch apart, then snap together. That gives the effect of a kick in the pants. If that's clear.

Julie is an early victim and from there, the story is convulsed by people receiving inviolable kicks and Marc being blamed for them and chased and etc. etc. etc.

The action occurs at the beginning of the Cold War Era. Everyone is sitting around, sour and depressed, feeling the atomic bomb and atomic war suspended over their heads. (This is a reasonably accurate rendering of the feelings people had at the time. No one had yet learned of the hydrogen bomb.)

After a lot of undirected play with her ring, Toffee gets herself introduced to a Congressman. Learning how serious the atomic war threat is, she soon takes herself off to

Russia (unnamed). There she gives Joe Stalin (also unnamed) a ray-induced kick in the pants and forces him to disarm the country.

Following this triumph, she returns to the United States and forces it to disarm by lavishly administering kicks to the Congress, the War Department, and the President. (The President is a former radio personality, elected by mistake to the nation's highest office.)

Subsequent issues of Imagination continued to promise a new Toffee novel, although nothing seems to have been published until the October 1954 "The Laughter of Toffee," another short novel. This may easily be the best story of the series.

Arrested as a dirty postcard peddler by error, Marc accidentally drinks a French elixir. This causes him to develop X-ray vision--X-ray to the extent of seeing through people's clothing. And off we go:

-- To the riot at the lingerie shop, where Toffee strips the clothing from a live model and hordes of nude girls mingle in screaming confusion with a squad of police.

-- To the department store, where Marc's X-ray vision so disconcerts him that he dons black glasses and has to be led around.

-- To an excursion on a sight-seeing bus, accompanied by a tipsy mob of gangsters and molls.

-- To a frenzied chase at Marc's home in the country, where a group of nudists are having a picnic.

What with gangsters and dolls and nudists and police flinging themselves back and forth, and Julie entranced by a smooth-talking artist, and Toffee full of champagne and exciting ideas--with all this, Marc has an exhausting time.

As usual, it all ends in court. Whereupon Mr. Myers shakes his magic wand. All complications melt away. And the final Toffee adventure has been told, as far as this commentator can determine.

Although a sort of curtain call did appear in the November 1954

Imaginative Tales. This reprinted both "Toffee Takes A Trip" and "Toffee Haunts A Ghost," in the same issue. Whether other stories were reprinted has not been determined.

The Toffee stories made a charming series, full of irrational joy. Exactly what you want in a broad farce. Many more Toffee adventures would not be too many. There is not nearly enough Thorne Smith in this world, and Myers' continuations are gratefully accepted. Lord knows, we need more stories full of falling-down confusion and hilarity. And a lot more warm-hearted red heads who have trouble staying dressed.

end

FOOTNOTES

1. Edward J. Gallagher, The Annotated Guide to Fantastic Adventures, Starmont Reference Guides No. 2, Starmont House, Inc. (1985). A detailed discussion of the magazine, themes, characters, writers, and editorial matters is provided, as well as a detailed checklist of the magazine, issue by issue, plus story summaries. This is a superior reference work.

2. Biographical information on Charles Myers may be found in Fantastic Adventures, February 1949, pp. 2 and 149.

3. William Lawrence Hamling, "The Editorial," Inagination, Stories of Science and Fantasy, Vol. 2 No. 1, (February 1951), pp. 5 and 31.

Toffee
by Charles F. Myers

in Fantastic Adventures

1947

Jan I'll Dream of You (short story)
Mar You Can't Scare Me (novelette)
July Toffee Takes A Trip (novelette)
Nov Toffee Haunts a Ghost (novelette)

1948

Nov The Spirit of Toffee (novelette)

1949

Feb Toffee Turns the Trick (novelette)

1950

June The Shades of Toffee (novel)

in Inagination, Stories of Science Fiction and Fantasy

1951

Feb The Vengeance of Toffee (novelette)

1954

Oct The Laughter of Toffee (novel)

in Imaginative Tales

1954

Nov Toffee Takes a Trip and Toffee Haunts a Ghost



A WORD CALLED PULP: PULP INSPIRED PAPERBACK

by
Gary Lovisi

Pulp magazine art has inspired the covers and styles in many mediums from radio drama, tv action programs, comic books, music videos, album cover art---and paperback book covers especially.

One reason for this likeness is that the same artists who did those great pulp covers of yesteryear, later did paperback covers when that field began to open in the 1940s. Another reason is that both pulps and early paperbacks are almost the same medium, were sold at the same locations, handled by the same store owners, distributors, publishers, and bought by the same readers. Also, pulps and early paperback books were heavily genre oriented, in essence pulps and early paperbacks were almost the same thing---just different in size or format. To some people this is everything and a big difference and to others it may mean very little.

Today that old pulp style of danger, action, adventure, veiled sex, (some critics call it all a form of high-camp) is being used on many newly published books as a selling tool to show the prospective reader just what the book is about and what he/she can expect from it. Or new pulp art can be commissioned to be used in a nostalgic vein to package a timeless classic---to put into the proper time frame a book from a famous author's early career, or to just give the message that this book is "fun".

The first book I'd like to look at is called Yellow Peril by Richard Jaccome. This is a first paperback printing by Berkley Books from December 1980, (#045560-\$2.95-305pp) and has a fine modern rendering of a pulp cover by an uncredited artist.

This is a great new pulp novel which bills itself as an "Erotic adventure in the outrageous style of

the original pulp". It certainly is! The book purports to be the memoirs of a worldwide adventurer, a Doc Savage-like superhuman British secret agent named Sir John Weymouth-Smythe. The book is one heck of a good romp and highly recommended, especially to the lovers of the hero and shudder pulps.

The next book is a bit of old-time science fiction called Pianora Three by Frederik Pohl. This is a first edition, paperback original published by Berkley Books in January 1982, (#052249-\$2.50-225pp) with an exquisite modern version of the old sf pulp BEM (bugged eyed monster- ed) style by Gregg Hinlicky. The book contains three old Pohl sf stories, "Figurehead", "Red Moon Of Danger", and "Donovan Had A Dream", all from the 1930s sf pulps. There is also included a nice new five page introduction to these old gems by Pohl. This is a nice collection, though certainly not up to Pohl's usual great work, (this is afterall very early material from his career) but it is a lot of fun to read and the cover certainly gives on a hint of the wonders found within.

Memoir of Murder by Ray Bradbury is another real gem of a book. This is a first edition, paperback original published by Dell Books in February 1984, (#15559-\$2.95-192pp) with a real great shudder pulp cover by another uncredited artist. Why don't these companies ever credit these artists?

The book contains fifteen various shudder/detective/mystery stories all from Bradbury's early days when he wrote for pulps like Dime Mystery Magazine and Detective Tales. The stories in this book are all drawn from those pulps, from the years 1944-1948 and some are remarkably good even to this day. All are fine entertainments, especially those featuring his weird detective hero, 'The Douser'. The cover art for this book is a gorgeous piece of artwork and should, considering the famous name of the author of these stories,

COLLECTED IN ONE VOLUME FOR THE FIRST TIME!

MEMORY

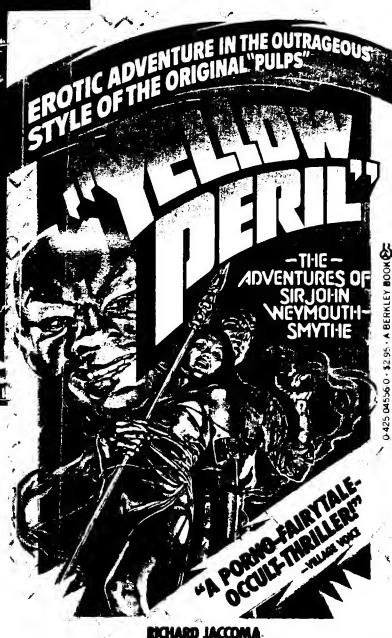
VINTAGE GEMS OF CRIME
AND TERROR BY A MODERN
MASTER OF THE MACABRE



Recently Creative Arts-Black Lizard books in Berkley California have reprinted three Thompson titles with many more promised and on the way soon. All have fine nostalgic pulp-style artwork by Nancy MacGregor, who has really done a fine job in making each cover exciting, accurate, pulpish, and interesting--and all are done in slightly differing ways as

and the book's first edition status--make this book a prime collectible in the future.

Jim Thompson was a fine writer of weird and hard-boiled noir novels in the fifties and sixties. Today his work is highly prized and collectible and many of his old paperbacks are equally hard to come by.



well.

The book I've chosen to list and include a picture of is, Pop. 1280, which is a reprint from the 1964 paperback. This Black Lizard edition is from 1984 (#916870766-\$3.95-215pp). Other books in this company's revival of Jim Thompson's work are, The Get-away, A Hell of A Woman, Savage Night, Recoil, The Grifter, and Nothing More Than Murder. All these fine books can be ordered for \$3.95 each (plus .95 cents postage per book) from Creative Arts, 833 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA. 94710.

And there you have it, a small sampling of pulp inspired paperbacks, all recently published, and all containing some real good stuff for the fan of pulp. Great covers, old stories brought back to the public--and in Yellow Peril, a great new novel, neglected, but certainly worth a look---that is, if you can find it in some out-of-print book shop. It just goes to show that there is an enduring and endearing feeling out there in bookland for pulp-style art and material, otherwise none of these books would have been packaged this way---for it's a word which apella adventure, action, danger, sex, and fun to the book buying public. It's a word called PULP.



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JOHN NANOVIC; EDITOR

by
Albert Tonik

PulpCon 11 was held in Dayton on July 8-11, 1982. The guest of honor was John I. Nanovic. He was an editor at Street & Smith from late in 1930 until early in 1943. He edited such magazines as The Shadow, Doc Savage, Pete Rice, Nick Carter, The Skipper, The Avenger, Crime Busters, Clues, The Feds, Movie Action and You.

During the convention, Mr. Nanovic gave several impromptu talks and answered a number of questions. He participated in a panel discussion on Friday evening and answered questions from the floor after dinner on Saturday. What follows is an edited version of what I recorded on tape. I have attempted to identify the various speakers, but I may have some of the names wrong. If so, I apologize. So, on with the show.

John Nanovic: Over the past years there have been a lot of stories about the pulps, some true, some false. I am going to give you the true facts about the beginning of The Shadow. (like a politician gives you the "true" facts in order to be elected). I have heard so many different stories that I am not sure I know the facts. My premise is that The Shadow Magazine was an accident, but it turned out to be the most successful of the character pulp magazines.

I grew up in the printing and newspaper business. I was hired as a messenger boy, wrapping-up-boy, and printer's devil at the local newspaper shop in my home town of Palmerton, Pennsylvania. I worked before and after school. Shorty Peters ran the monotype (a monotype is a sophisticated linotype). After a few months, I mentioned to Shorty that so and so had gone shopping in Allentown and other tidbits. He included them in the paper. When the paper came

out, George Elliston, the owner, asked Shorty where he got the items at the end of the personal column. Shorty told him they came from John-n-y. Elliston questioned me about the validity of the items. I assured him they were true. He asked if I wanted to bring in more items for next week. I scouted around town for the next six months gathering material for the weekly personal column. One day, Mr. Elliston asked if I wanted more money. He took me to Allentown, eighteen miles from Palmerton, to the "big city" newspaper, THE ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL. Spurge Weston, the editor in charge of correspondence from the neighboring small towns, hired me to write a column about Palmerton. I was paid a dollar a column. Believe me, I filled a column every day (even if I had to invent items). The better stories were about the Palmerton Basketball team, which was the best in the state. Some of these stories were reprinted in the Philadelphia and Harrisburg papers, from which I made more money.

During my junior year in high school, George Elliston became ill. He asked me if I wanted to be editor. So for the next four years, I was editor of the PALMERTON PRESS. But I wanted to go to college. The only college that I considered was Notre Dame. All the Nanovics have gone to Notre Dame. Why, recently, we had a girl attend. When my older brother started his fourth year, I entered Notre Dame.

My idea was to major in Journalism. When I arrived I discovered that they had a very good Journalism course. But with my experience, half the courses would be a waste of time. I decided to major in English under Father Carrico and take electives in Journalism from Professor Cooney. Dean Carrico demanded academic perfection. We hated him but respected him. He would insist on us using the right word at the right time. If he said that a word was not correct, I had to find the right one. All four-

teen of us English Majors learned to write, and we have written a lot since then.

Father Carrico harassed us at every opportunity. Once I got back at him. In my junior year I was washing dishes at St. Mary's where a number of students lived. The girls who waited on tables were called "scullery maids" which was really a term of endearment because they were very nice kids. Father Carrico's niece was one of the scullery maids. One day he asked me to give her a message, "Tell Isabel that I can not see her this afternoon, but I can see her tomorrow". I replied, "I will tell her, but she will not believe me. She is stubborn." He said, "John, I am wasting my time on you. Stubborn is not the right word. It is thick-headed." "I would not call her thick-headed." "What would you call her?" "Well, a pretty girl like Isabel, I would call darling or honey or sweetheart." He sputtered and said, "Just give her the message."

While at Notre Dame, I was the editor-in-chief of the campus comic publication, The Juggler. In addition, I sold a great deal of freelance writing to outside magazines. If I went to a newsstand, I was expected to buy a quality magazine such as the Atlantic Monthly. If Father Carrico ever caught me even looking at a pulp magazine, he would have thrown me out of the English Department and probably, out of Notre Dame and might even have excommunicated me from the Catholic Church.

In my junior year I had four jobs lined up for when I graduated. But October 1929 occurred in my senior year. In April, I went to Chicago to see College Humor magazine. I had sold a number of humorous pieces to them. I had shown them some ideas for selling ads. They had said that I could run their College Ad Department. When I got there, they took me to lunch on the top of the Wrigley

Building. They told me that they had no money. So that was one job I did not take. After graduation, I went to New York to see Jack Shuttleworth at Judge magazine. I had sold material to them and they had offered me a job. Shuttleworth said I could have the job, but his position would disappear in a few months and so would mine. That is the second job I turned down. Ray Long was the editor of Cosmopolitan. He had friends in Palmerton and used to visit there several times a year. I caddied for him. He had offered me a job. The weekend after the Judge job, Ray Long came to Palmerton. I went to his friend's house to see Long. The friend told me not to take the job. The magazine was in deep trouble. Ray would honor his promise but he could not afford it. So I turned down my third job. I could have had my old job at the Palmerton Press back, but I decided to try freelancing. So I turned down the fourth job offer.

How did I ever get together with a pulp magazine publishing house? I saw an announcement in Writers Digest that Sport Stories wanted stories about college sports. I had never seen an issue of Sport Stories. I wrote an article entitled, Notre Dame, College of the Masses and submitted it. Then one day I received a letter from Street & Smith with a check for \$75.00. Lon Murray asked me to come in to see about some changes in the article. He could have penciled the changes himself in two minutes. They were starting up a new magazine, College Stories. Would I like the job of editor. I jumped at the chance until I heard the salary, only \$25 per week. That was not bad for that time, but not for a college graduate. Murray explained that I could make more money by selling stories to other editors. I had the inside track to all at Street & Smith and sometimes to editors at other companies. That is how a high class English Major from Notre Dame became

a pulp editor at Street & Smith.

College Stories lasted about five issues. In the meanwhile other things were happening. In my second week, Lon Murray asked me to layout The Shadow Magazine. He gave me the galley proofs and told me to dig up some short stories to fill up the 128 pages. I agreed. He had asked the other editors but they had turned him down. I was new at Street & Smith. I did not know that when you took on more work, you were not compensated more. I got the first issue out. Nothing was said about a second issue. Lon Murray was trying a magazine called Headlines, which was to compete with Time. It was a flop. Murray was fired. Blackwell came to me and said that College Stories would be discontinued but I would edit The Shadow Magazine and report to Bill Ralston. Who was Bill Ralston? The General Manager.

How did The Shadow Magazine start? Street & Smith had published Detective Story Magazine since 1915. However sales began to slip. Street & Smith sponsored a radio program which featured stories from the magazine. In 1930 the announcer and narrator was a mysterious voice known only as The Shadow. The radio program seemed to be a hit but the sales of the magazine did not improve. Ralston sent his road men out to find out why. They reported back that the people were asking for that Shadow magazine and the newsstand people did not know what they meant. Ralston told Frank Blackwell to get out an issue of a magazine called The Shadow. Blackwell told Murray to get out a magazine with a good story. Murray told Walter Gibson that he wanted a damn good mystery story about the character, The Shadow, the voice from the radio program. Murray told Gibson to put a Chinese scene in the story because Street & Smith had an old cover with a picture of a Chinaman threatened by a shadow. (Note: This appeared originally, on

the cover of The Thrill Book, the October 1919 issue.) Walter Gibson made up the entire story using his own ideas about the characterization of The Shadow. (Another note: regardless of what Lon Murray asserts these days.)

Now to return to my story. It was a Friday when Blackwell told me that I would edit The Shadow Magazine and report to Ralston. Also, he told me to get a second Shadow story ready. Ralston was on the sixth floor. My office had been moved three buildings away. Street & Smith were six buildings in a row, interconnected, with steps between the buildings. The front building had editorial offices and executive offices on the sixth floor, composing room on the seventh floor, and some editorial offices on the fifth floor with rolls of paper. Paper rolls were everywhere because Street & Smith was a printing house more than a publishing house. On Monday morning, I called Mr. Ralston. In all the years that I worked for him, I never called him other than Mr. Ralston. Everyone else called him Bill. (Note: See the introduction to the Dover Publications book on The Shadow in 1975.) His secretary said he was busy and he would get together with me later. On Wednesday I called again, with the same result. On Friday, the same. She suggested that I keep doing what I was. I was waiting to find out what I should be doing. Monday, the same. Wednesday, he came to my office. He was 6' 4" and had to stoop to enter my office. He introduced himself. He said he was busy with other things that week. "Mark you calendar to have lunch with me on Monday." I said I would, even though I had no calendar. On Monday, he was still busy.

Finally on Wednesday, we had lunch together. He began to tell me of his ideas for a group of magazines based on individual characters. That was the start of the Street & Smith method. The author would come in for a

bull session of about an hour. Sometimes Mr. Ralston would sit in on these sessions. We would kick around plot ideas. The author would go away and send in an outline of 20 or 30 pages. If it was approved, and 99% of the time it was, then the author was guaranteed a sale when the story came in to the office. For most of the other publishers, the author would send in a story and it was bought or returned. The author never knew which treatment it would receive. At this first luncheon, Mr. Ralston told me to get a second issue of The Shadow together. I called Walter Gibson and we discussed story ideas. Walt sent in a second story and by this time the first issue had appeared on the newsstands. It sold out. So The Shadow Magazine was well on its way to being the most successful of the character pulp magazines. When it went to a semi-monthly schedule, Walt would have two story ideas approved at the monthly bull sessions. Every story that Gibson submitted, he wrote himself. Other authors would submit stories that were written by a ghost writer sometimes. That practice was tolerated as long as the story was acceptable.

House names were a standard practice in the industry. But the readers did not seem to have much loyalty to other stories written by the same name. An example of this is the magazine, Crime Busters. You would think that readers would flock to a magazine with authors such as Maxwell Grant, Kenneth Robeson, Ted Tinsley, Steve Fisher, etc., advertised on the cover. But the magazine just plodded along. And now, it is time for some questions.

Earl Kussman Mr. Steeger, of Popular Publications, said that he made a lot of money in the pulp magazine field. What was considered a good year in gross sales or even net sales?

John Nanovic I do not know. I was not privy to that information.

But the Smiths made a million dollars.

Earl Kussman At a dime a copy, how could you make money?

John Nanovic The 10 cent pulp cost little to manufacture. After the distributor and the newdealer got their profit, the cost was about five cents. So if you sold more than 50% of the magazines, you made a good deal of money.

Unknown Were you involved in the 1955 history of Street & Smith?

John Nanovic No. The author of that book was Quentin Reynolds. He called me one day and said that Bill Ralston told him to talk to me. He wanted to meet that day. I could not make it, I was busy. I suggested another day but he could not make it. He never got my input. (Note: which is a reflection on how accurate the information is, that is presented in Mr. Reynolds book.)

Richard Clear Did the early issues of Doc Savage and The Shadow sell well?

John Nanovic Yes. They sold extremely well. Not every issue did well. This was an argument that I had with Ralston and Van Delft. If an issue of The Shadow had 30% returns instead of the usual 15%, Van Delft and Della Valle, head of shipping, would tell me it was a poor story. When I asked why they thought so, they would say it dropped in sales. I would counter, that the reader does not know whether it is a good story or not, until he buys it and reads it. The issue that should be examined was the previous issue. They would never accept that reasoning.

Walter Gibson and I discussed the return situation, long after it did us any good. The Shadow was replaced on the newsstand in two weeks, regardless of how the previous issue sold. If there was a big storm on the East Coast and no one could get out, it did not matter. Why did not the experts, who told us why a copy did not sell, such as Ralston or

Della Valle or Van Delft, think of leaving the old copies on the shelves besides the new ones. Then if a new reader bought a copy and liked it, he could go back and pick up other copies immediately, rather than having to wait for the next issue.

Richard Clear Would you fiddle with the amount of the print run when this happened or would it be constant from issue to issue?

John Nanovic No, the print run was constant. Munsey taught us the folly of changing the print run. Their circulation was slipping the same as all the other publishers. They hired some efficiency experts. They pointed out that if a magazine such as All Story got 40% returns, then cutting the print run by 10% would reduce the returns to 30% and increase the profits. But cutting the run meant cutting the distribution. Some months one store would sell well and other months another store did well. So their cuts lost some business which resulted in more cuts, until there was no more Munsey.

John Roy Did you ever turn down a Shadow or Doc Savage story?

John Nanovic No! As I said, they never started to write a story until it was ok'ed.

Jack Deveny If you got a good response to a villain, such as Shiwan Khan, would you encourage Gibson to write another story about him?

John Nanovic We did repeat stories with the same villain several times. But there never was a strong response to any story.

Jack Deveny Why did Tinsley get into the act as far as The Shadow is concerned?

John Nanovic Because Walter had to produce two stories a month. For safety sake, we had to have a reserve. I called Ted Tinsley and invited him for a free lunch and the promise of some work. When I told him what I wanted, he packed up a bunch of Shadow magazines and went home and read them. Then he handed in a story which in his words "was the best bang-bang story I could do following

Walt Gibson's style as well as I could."

Jack Deveny Was there any different reaction to a Tinsley story from the readers? When you read them, today, the Tinsley stories are just blood everywhere. Not like a Gibson story at all.

John Nanovic No! If we got five letters in one month, that was a deluge of letters. The readers did not seem to notice any difference. If a reader was unhappy about a story, he would not write, he would stop buying the magazine. It is different today. You know who wrote the various stories. When you read them, you notice the different writing styles.

Jack Deveny You read every story in your magazines. You are a college graduate with a degree in English. Yet your stories had to appeal to the masses who may not have graduated from high school. Did you judge stories differently than other editors?

John Nanovic I judged a story on whether it was interesting. I did not judge the writing ability or the author. I did not care whether the author used proper grammar.

Tony Toilin In the book, The Night Master by Robert Sampson, Ted Tinsley is quoted as saying, "Never once did I think of 'pleasing the reader'. All I wanted to please was Nanovic. A good editor knows what will please his readers, and if he guessed wrong he wouldn't last long with the publishers. Nanovic did know and he did last a long time."

John Nanovic That needs a slight correction. John Nanovic did not know all the time. An editor thinks he knows what the reader wants, but he would not bet his life on it.

Rusty Hevelin You said that every Shadow story for which you paid Walter Gibson, he wrote. On the other hand, you paid Lester Dent for some Doc Savage stories that he had a ghost writer do.

John Nanovic That is correct. Walt did his own stories. Lester

Dent did use some ghosts. Most of the time he would tell me. I know that Bogart did some, Davis did some, Ryerson Johnson did some.

Will Murray Richard Sale started one by never finished.

John Nanovic Richard Sale never did a Doc Savage story. He said he did his first story while he was in college in some southern school (Washington and Lee College according to The Pulp Jungle by Frank Gruber). It was a good story and I asked for more. He sent three more which I purchased. Then the first story appeared in print. We got more mail on that story than anything else. It was a snake story and everyone objected to it. I printed one more story of his, but then stopped. Those other stories are probably still in a safe somewhere.

Ray Walsh What is the story on The Shadow Club and the Doc Savage Club?

John Nanovic Those were terrific clubs. Street & Smith made a lot

of money on those clubs. Of the 10 cents that were sent in, Street & Smith made 4 cents.

Tony Tollin Do you have any idea how many people joined the clubs? How many dimes per day did Street & Smith receive?

John Nanovic I do not know. I had no access to those records. I would guess that The Shadow Club and the Doc Savage Club had at least 700,000 members.

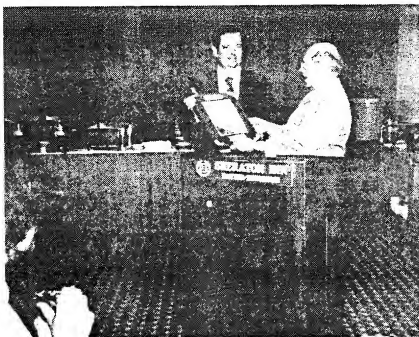
Unknown Where are all the problems?

Earl Kussman What was your worst klunker?

John Nanovic (Pause) The reason I am hesitating is because I am trying to pick out which one of many. The biggest disappointment was Crime Busters. Here was a book with our big names in it, but it did no better than if it were written by unknowns. Nick Carter was a real klunker. We should have discontinued that magazine after two issues. Ralston liked it and said we should keep trying.



From left to right: Robert Sampson, Will Murray, John Nanovic



From left to right: Richard Clear, John Nanovic

We tried, even with different writers, but it was past its prime.

Eeri Kusman Do you think the covers had something to do with that?

Fred Cook The covers were photographs.

John Nanovic The only pulp with photographs on the covers was Crime Busters. That was James' idea. It did not seem to help. We got no complaints about the Nick Carter covers. Our road men were pretty sharp. They would talk to retailers and readers and pick up on faults.

Richard Clear The Nick Carter character was trying to bring a character from the 18902 or a Victorian person to the present.

John Nanovic I suppose so. The readers who had liked Nick Carter, were not reading magazines anymore. The new kids did not take to him.

Tom Johnson How long after a magazine was distributed before you found out about the sales? How many issues of a magazine would you run before dropping it? Was there a rule-of-thumb about returns for dropping a magazine?

John Nanovic American News would pass the information about sales and returns to Street & Smith.

I was not supposed to know that information. However, I was friendly with the people in the press room and they would tell me how many copies they printed. Mike Morrissey of American News would tell me about sales, sometimes, because he thought I was privy to that information. Also, I knew the people in Chelsea News and they would tell me how many were sold. Relston would have been upset if he knew I was getting that information.

Ray Walsh How many copies of the magazines were printed each month?

John Nanovic The peak circulation of The Shadow was about 250,000 or 260,000. That meant that we printed a little over 300,000. Doc Savage never reached the peak of The Shadow, but was not far behind. That is why we never went twice a month of Doc Savage Magazine. How long did it take before we cancelled a magazine? There was no rule. It depended on the guys in the corner, the Smiths. They kept their eye on the business.

There is one humorous story. The Smiths came to Blackwell one day and told him to cancel Top Notch. Three

months later, they asked where was Top Notch. Blackwell reminded them that they had killed it. No! No! Not Top Notch! You should have cancelled Tip Top.

But the Smiths knew what was happening in their offices even though they did not seem to pay attention. Every morning, the Smiths came in about 11 o'clock. Louie, the doorman, would send a signal that they were on their way up. We would all look busy. O.G. and G.C. would walk straight through without looking left or right. A chef would be behind them taking their order for lunch. But they knew what was going on and we were dressed down for having too many visitors in our offices.

The company had a rule against dating between staff members. Ann was working in the cashier's office. We were going together, but no one knew it (we hoped). We were forgiven after we were married.

Will Murray In 1933, two of the Smiths died within a few weeks of each other. That was just as the character pulps were becoming popular. Do you think things would have been different if they had lived?

John Nanovic O.G. and G.C. died. G.C. Jr. became president. But they all listened to the advice of Mr. Ralston. There would have been no difference in the direction Street & Smith took. G.C. Jr. was a nice young man, but he did not have the interest in the business that the older Smiths had. He had a yacht in Westbury and would rather be sailing. Four years later, he died and Judge Holmes took over the business. He tried to run the company but his heart was not in it. Then they brought in the publisher from the World Telegram, but he did nothing in the year he was in charge.

Finally, they settled on Grammer from Curtis. Grammer was the best production man in the country, but knew nothing about editing. he had inven-

ted the Grammer spray which allowed the slick magazines to increase production. The ink had to dry on one side, which took a long time, before you could print on the other side. The Grammer spray was a wax that covered the ink and allowed immediate printing on the other side. Grammer helped the slick magazines at Street & Smith, which magazines made money for them, but did nothing for the pulps. Grammer brought in de Grouchy and a woman who was a secretary. De Grouchy took over the editing, but he was a promotion man and knew nothing of editing. The woman took over Detective Story Magazine and killed it in three issues.

Tony Toilin Why did they not consider Bill Ralston for President of the firm?

John Nanovic I do not know. Mr. Ralston never had a title, officially. Only the Smiths were boss. The rest of us worked there. But Ralston ran the works. Unofficially, he was General Manager and Chief Executive Officer. Ralston ran the business end of the company and the manufacturing end. Editorially, when I started with the company, Blackwell was in charge. However, Love Story Magazine, which had the best circulation and was a weekly, was under Ralston.

Albert Tonik In the Doc Savage Magazine there were a series of articles on the daily exercises performed by Doc Savage. How are you involved with those articles?

John Nanovic I bought them. I do not recall from whom. We did a number of articles. In The Shadow Magazine we ran a series of articles by the Better Business Bureau on how to keep merchants from cheating you.

Don Hutchison I understand that Popular Publications experimented with shipping their magazines to England. Did Street & Smith?

John Nanovic All the companies tried everything. But nothing really helped much.

Tony Toilin On my trip to England, I learned that during the

'50s, it was easier to pick up Doc Savage and The Shadow there then in the States. Huge numbers were sold in Woolworths.

Rusty Hovein During World War II, a lot of magazines were shipped as ballast.

John Nanovic The returns were a dead issue as far as I was concerned. I did not know what happened to them. Raiston may have mentioned that some were shipped as ballast, but I never questioned him any further.

Eari Kusaman How did Lester Dent secure the subsidiary rights to Doc Savage?

John Nanovic He argued for them. Lester was a tough character. He said he wanted those right. No other author asked for them. We told all authors that we buy all right, but if you can sell something, we will release them to you. In thirteen years only about 4 stories were sold and those for about \$50 each. Movie companies were in every week to buy titles, but our legal department said that if you buy the title, you own the story as well. But they wanted to write their own stories.

Lester worked hard to try to sell Doc Savage to radio, comics, etc. The Shadow was on radio before we started with the character pulps. There is an interesting story about Blue Coal. They had sponsored The Shadow radio program for three years, then they cancelled. Eddie was a nephew of the Smiths. I approached him with the idea to sell The Shadow to another sponsor. He wanted to know how to do that. I told him to make up a presentation. He asked for help. I got presentation ready for him. I told him to go to Blue Coal to get a letter stating how successful the show had been for them. We drew up the letter for them to sign. Eddie went to Blue Coal. When he came back, I asked how things went. he said, "They bought it." They agreed it was a good show and signed for another year.

Will Murray Lester Dent worked

hard to sell Doc Savage to other media. He created and sold a Doc Savage radio show in 1934 that ran 26 episodes. It was broadcast nationwide. He tried with Paul Urban to create a newspaper strip. They did a sample Sunday page and several dailies, which did not sell. Later he tried another radio show which never got off the ground. In the first Shadow Comic there was a Doc story adapted from the novels. I do not know who sold to the Doc Savage Comic.

John Nanovic Les did the early ones. He would not let anything out of his hands. If he did not do them, he watched them carefully. Les was the only guy in the history of Street & Smith to acquire all the rights.

Will Murray You might wonder why a character such as Doc Savage never made it to the serials or movies or TV. Lester Dent insisted he be allowed to write the stories. There were offers, but they fell through.

John Nanovic Lester's problem was that he tried to break into those fields on his own. If you want to break into another field, you have to tie in with someone in that field. Les wanted to do things right, which is noble but impractical. Not many people know it, but I did a dozen radio scripts for The Lone Ranger in the early '40s. I told Lester to work with Ruthrauf & Ryan, who handled The Shadow radio program. Bourne Ruthrauf would have put Doc on the air in a good spot, but Les wanted complete control.

Jack Deveny You must have been watching the competition. I suspect that Popular was the big competitor.

John Nanovic I think that the Thrilling Group under Leo Marquies was rougher than Popular. In the Popular line, The Spider and Dime Detective were doing well, but I do not think many of the others were. But I had no way of knowing. Raiston's reaction was that we do not have anything to worry about, we are so far ahead of them.

Earl Kussman Did you ever have to say "No" to Graves Gladney? He was 6' 5" tall and weighed 250 pounds.

John Nanovic I never worked with Graves Gladney. That was James' department. If I wanted to, I would say no to James. Gladney claimed I knew nothing of art. He was right. But when I went to a newsstand, the covers that attracted my eye were those that had red in them.

Richard Clear As editor did you have anything to say about the art?

John Nanovic Officially I did not have any say in the art department. I did worry about the art and once in awhile I spoke to the art department about it. Most of the other editors did not. I worked closely with James and Lawlor. We were friends. We bowled together. In fact, that whole gang of guys, worked and played together. It was like a family relationship.

Richard Clear In talking to L.B. Cole, he said that he did a lot of repainting, including some Shacows.

John Nanovic It must have been at the suggestion of James. James had The Shadow and Lawlor had Doc Savage.

Richard Clear Baumhofer has made the statement that some covers, when printed, would be different than what he turned in. No one ever told him about the changes.

John Nanovic It is strange that Baumhofer was not told to make the changes. Maybe Baumhofer refused to make changes and James had some one else do them. I would tell my writers to make changes. They never refused. We were friends. Some used to drop in on my house in Palmerton and spend the weekend. I think I was the first editor to make the rounds of August Lenniger and other literary agents looking for stories. I told them I could pay only one cent a word while others were paying one and a half. They said no other editor had ever left his office. They had to go to the editor with a story.

Richard Clear Why was the cover slightly larger than the ragged pages.

John Nanovic The ragged pages were there because it cost extra to trim them. The cover overlap was to protect the pages from being ripped. The page stock was on rolls which were wide enough to print eight pages at once. The cover stock was on rolls that allowed only four pages at once. Later, hoping to increase sales, we trimmed the pages. It did not help. Trimming was expensive.

Ray Wajan Do you know how many Doc Savage portraits, that were premiums, were sent out?

John Nanovic I do not have the faintest idea. The response on them and the Doc Savage Honorable Award was terrific. We had communities writing us letters. But it did not increase the circulation, at least, not like the clubs did.

Albert Tonix Did you ever miss any deadlines?

John Nanovic Never! I was known for always being ahead of deadline. The material was in and I sent it to the composing room long before it was due. I could put little blurbs in the middle of the page. They never did that before. It helped that I was Catholic. The whole production crew was Catholic: Foley, Cleary, and the rest. If the work was to be upstairs on Friday, I would do it on Monday. I would not wait for Thursday and be up all night. I had a safe full of short stories from which to choose. The only make-up problem was, the advertising department did not know how many pages they would fill until the last moment. Richards, who was a good editor, was baffled by this problem. I told him to plan his letters column for five pages and lose a page or two to the ads. He wanted to know how to select the letters. Just use them all, like the rest of the editors do. If you need more space, trim the departments such as codes or club news.

Will Murray In your first discussions with Ralston on Doc Savage,

how fully developed were the ideas?

John Nanovic Doc was Bill Ralston's idea. When he talked to me the first time, he had 70% or 80% of everything worked out. He suggested we ought to have a character with science adventures. That was the first time I had heard that term. I think, that type of story was one of the secrets of Doc Savage's success. He mentioned that he knew a person named Savage and began to describe him. Of course, he could have been describing himself because Ralston was a big powerful man.

The two of us kicked it around for about two months, including six lunches. I tried to stretch it out for more lunches because he ate at an expensive, Irish restaurant, Halloran's on 6th Avenue.

In the meanwhile, we had Lester Dent write a Shadow story. Then we called him in and explained about Doc Savage. Lester pounced on the idea. We told him to come back in a week. I wrote the thirty page outline of the first story which you found at Dent's place. I gave this to Lester. He wanted to know when we wanted the story. I told him two weeks. He turned in in ten days later and there was no major change in it. Now I do not mean to imply that Lester Dent did not put anything into the Doc Savage story. If you read that 15,000 word outline, all the characters are just figures. Lester Dent breathed life into them and made the story interesting. The popularity of Doc Savage is 90% Lester Dent and only 10% for Bill Ralston and myself for discussion of plots.

Will Murray In that first meeting, Ralston had the name, Doc Savage ready?

John Nanovic Yes, he and all the names. Monk was described. I think Renny was added in the fourth meeting.

Will Murray Long Tom was the nickname for the character, Thomas J. Roberts. Thomas Jefferson was known

as Long Tom. Could the 'J' have stood for Jefferson?

John Nanovic I do not know. Most of these people Bill Ralston had known.

Fred Cook Mrs. Dent told me that Les had a notebook and on the front it, had the label, How it all began. She said she did not know where it was.

Will Murray I saw that, as well as the John Nanovic outline.

John Nanovic Then she found it. What was his version?

Will Murray After he read your outline, he wrote down all the pertinent information and added some things. Some of the things he dropped when he wrote the novel. He made it obvious that Doc's headquarters was in the Empire State building. He talked about Doc's Fortress of Solitude in the Arctic, which was not in the outline.

John Nanovic A good writer supplies his own ideas. We had discussions with the writers to discuss their ideas for future stories. We may have supplied them with one quarter of the plot ideas, but by far the effort was the writer's. If Gibson and Dent and Tinsley and Conlon and the other guys had not put life into those characters, the books would not have lasted through six issues.

Digges LaTouche You were discussing the creation of Doc Savage. Was this the way the other character pulps at Street & Smith were created, The Whisperer and The Skipper and so forth?

John Nanovic Just about. They were not completely Bill Ralston's idea. Pete Rice was Charlie Stewart's idea. Stewart was a staff man that worked for Lon Murray. For a new character pulp, Ralston and I would kick the idea around for awhile, but then we would let everyone know what we were considering. Everyone could add their inputs. Unfortunately we could not create another hit such the The Shadow and Doc Savage.

Rusty Hevelin I have viewed The Skipper as being a reverse Doc Sa-

vage. Doc was straight arrow type of fellow, while The Skipper was a tougher, harder kind of hero. Were you in on the development of that character?

John Nanovic Yes, I was in on the development of The Skipper. A seaman should be a tougher kind of man. How can you become captain of a ship without being tough.

Fred Cook Walter Baumhofer gave me a sheet that was given to him before he painted the first Doc Savage cover. It was typewritten and outlined Doc and his friends. Who wrote that sheet?

John Nanovic I think I did. I gave it to James.

Darrell Richardson I notice that the Pete Rice covers had Doc Savage in a cowboy outfit. Also, the early Doc Savage was a trifle skinny. He became more muscular as time went by.

Will Murray Walter Baumhofer did the Pete Rice covers. At PULPCON 8, Walter Baumhofer said that his early model for Doc Savage was Bill Cuff. After three or four covers, he was replaced by a more muscular person, Carl Hewitt. Then Bill Cuff became the Pete Rice model. Bill Cuff was bald.

Bob Sampson If you look at some 1936 Argosy covers, you will see Doc Savage wearing a trench coat and carrying a pistol.

Will Murray Were you surprised when the paperback reprints started?

John Nanovic No. Walter Gibson knew that they were planning a paperback revival. He told me. You know that Street & Smith reprinted the first three Doc Savage stories as well as the first three Shadow stories. I was told to give them to Hatton, in production. They sold well. I asked Ralston when we were going to do more. He said we did not make any money on them. I said we should have made about four cents on each copy and we sold 100,000 of each. He said that because we printed them ourselves, it cost more and we only broke even. I was raised in

a print shop and could not understand how it could cost more for us to print them than someone else. Ralston told me not to worry about it. We had made money on printing them out not on publishing them. The same thing happened with The Shadow Annuals. Each one reprinted three Shadow stories and sold for 25 cents. We sold 125,000 of each but stopped because they did not make money.

Don Hutchison Did the writers get royalties from the reprints done by Chelsea House?

John Nanovic I do not know. I had nothing to do the Chelsea House. I would imagine the writers got royalties, but it could not have been much. Chelsea had a cheap line of books.

Digges LaTouche What was the difference between the Annual and the other reprints? Did Street & Smith do hard cover reprints?

Rusty Hevelin The Annuals were soft cover magazines in the bedsheet size.

John Nanovic Chelsea House was a part of Street & Smith. They put out about a dozen hard covers a month. Some were reprints from the pulps, but the majority were original novels. Chelsea House had more employees than Street & Smith proper. American News would take all their books and there were no returns.

Will Murray In looking through the first Shadow Annual, I noticed that the first story was cut considerably. Did you do that?

John Nanovic The first story was very long. We had a space restriction. Jones on my staff (Morris Odgen Jones) did the editing.

Fred Cook There were three Shadow Annuals, a Western Annual, a Detective Annual, a Love Annual, a Sea Annual, and a Sport Annual. There was a rumor about a Doc Savage Annual, but it never came.

John Nanovic I do not remember.

Fred Cook When Bantam received twenty letters in one month on Doc Savage, they thought it was marvelous. They felt everyone in the coun-

try was responding to the paperbacks. I told them that I was getting that many letters each week when I was producing Bronze Shadows. They wanted to see this fanzine. Why was I doing it? When the paperbacks came out, I thought the James Bama covers were stupendous. I corresponded with him. He loved the stories. I was looking for some way to express all this and no one else was doing anything. I was astounded at the reception to Bronze Shadows. After the third issue, I was printing 500 copies. Some people want to crucify me because they never got the last two issues on their subscription.

John Nanovic Do you have their money?

Fred Cook Yes. All of .35 cents per copy. I enjoyed the Doc Savage movie. I saw it for the third time with Leigh Brackett. We stood up and clapped when we heard the Doc Savage oath. Doc Savage was excellent, but his aides were all wrong.

Bob Sampson I bought two sets of the Doc Savage paperbacks, hoping one of my children would show some interest. I am still waiting.

John Nanovic When my children want something from me, I tell them they should write, something like Lester Dent. Bob would say with scorn, "Doc Savage's arm drifted out with lightning speed?" I would reply, "What is wrong with that? Doc Savage could do that!"

Darrell Richardson I have read many reports, particularly from western writers, that writers were very fond of Frank Blackwell.

John Nanovic They should be. He was a good guy. He took care of a lot of writers.

Darrell Richardson Did you ever meet Max Brand whose real name was Frederick Faust?

John Nanovic I met him, but only briefly. I am sure that Blackwell knew his real name.

Darrell Richardson That was because he had to pay him.

John Nanovic You do not have to be paid by your real name. You can

cash a check made out in any name. I get in a lot of arguments with so-called researchers who do not do their homework. Once called and asked how many stories I bought from Norman Daniels. I told him I never bought any. I bought stories from Norman A. Danberg, his real name. He lived in Connecticut. He drank a gallon of orange juice a day for his teeth. He had an electric typewriter and his copy was perfect. If I was stuck and called him and said, "Norm, I want a 10,000 word Chinese jewelry robbery story tomorrow morning." I would get it. It may not be the best, but it was acceptable. I don't think I turned down more than three of his stories in thirteen years. He was a good craftsman like Lester Dent. Les had more flair.

Darrell Richardson There is a story that Blackwell did not know all of Frederick Faust's aliases, Max Brand, George Owen Baxter, David Manning, etc. Could that be true?

John Nanovic I doubt it. Blackwell did not care if one person wrote a whole book as long as they were good stories. House names were standard practice. No one was trying to fool anyone else behind the scenes. The reason that Norman Danberg wrote under the name Norman Daniels is because Danberg is a Jewish name. Jewish names were not welcome anywhere in those times.

Fred Cook In later years Doc Savage changed from science adventure with locales all over the world, to plain adventure in the United States.

John Nanovic The situations changed over the years. We were not aware that we were doing drastically different types of stories. We worked from payday to payday. The changes were not conscious decisions, they were the natural outgrowths of current events and styles of writing.

Fred Cook In my opinion, when you left Street & Smith, the whole flavor of the magazines changed.

John Nanovic It was not the editors, who were left, that made those decisions. They were told to

change. About the time I left, all of the character pulps were slipping in popularity. I did not think so then, but I was a little worried. If it was just The Shadow and Doc Savage that were going downhill, you could blame the editor, Daisy Bacon or Babette Rosmond or whomever. But the same thing was happening to all the magazines, even the opposition. The day of the pulps was passing. In fact the day of the pulps was passing in 1930. The character pulps kept them alive for another fifteen years. Babette Rosmond told me about some of the changes she proposed for The Shadow. She was going to make it digest sized and trim the edges. But it did not help. Moran edited about three issues. He was a Notre Dame man, so I knew him pretty well. He came to me and said to hell with your books. I told Charlie they were no longer my books, he could make all the changes he wanted.

Fred Cook Walter Gibson called Babette Rosmond, the undertaker at Street & Smith. When a magazine was about to die, it was given to her and she held its hand till it passed away.

John Nanovic I know nothing about that, but she made a beautiful hand holder. After I left Street & Smith, I saw her a few times in Hollywood. She was doing script work. She has written a number of books.

Bob Sampson I think she has written five books, including The Life of Robert Benchley.

Will Murray Charles Moran. he took over as editor immediately after you.

John Nanovic He had Sport Stories. They gave him Doc Savage and The Shadow. They would give a magazine to an editor without changing his pay. But Charlie was not going to stay anywhere for any length of time.

Kessler was editing Detective Story Magazine. He was doing a good job but the magazine was losing readership. The woman from Curtis wanted

that post, so they fired Kessler. In her first issue, she ran two serials and the sales jumped 10%. The next issue, sales dropped 40% and that was the end of the book.

Anything that Grammer did, I did not like. I was fighting with him. Grammer told Raiston to tell that kid to go home. So I left. I got darn good severance pay. (Note: Since then John Nanovic has successfully run the Kudner Agency.)

Grammer liked the science fiction magazine, Astounding. It should have been killed years ago, but they kept it.

Rusty Hevelin It is the only magazine that has survived from that era.

John Nanovic It never made any money. It eked out an existence. If Grammer had not like it, it would have died two days after he arrived.

Will Murray The editor that caused the most change in Doc Savage was Charles Moran. In Dent's files, I saw letters between Dent and Moran. Dent sent in an outline for a Doc story. Moran tore it apart. He said no more running to foreign places. No more gadgets. He wanted suspense. Human interest. Lester Dent liked to build the story gradually. Moran said to delete the first three chapters and start right in on the story. He said to get rid of the girl.

John Nanovic Charlie did that with Sports Stories. It did not work with Doc. At that time, nothing worked.

When I was hired at Street & Smith, they had a style book. Blackwell drummed it into you. Their editorial policy was that everything had to be written accordingly. If a Lester Dent manuscript for a Doc Savage story ever fell into the hands of one of Blackwell's girls, they would change it all around. They would never print a sentence that began with And. Every sentence had to be grammatically correct. They would

never end a sentence, a preposition with. I was brought up differently. I did not see why stories written by different authors should sound alike. Cleary's wife, he was a sub-foreman of the composing room, she was head of the proof readers, told me that I do not edit very well, after I had been there about six months. She pointed out that there was page after page with no marks. All other editors made a lot of changes. For damn, you had to write d--n. Grey

was never gray. Clews was never clues. When we bought Clues there was turmoil.

Bob Sampson That might be why Detective Story had such a monotone to it.

John Nanovic Yes. It seemed to work in the '20s but not in the '30s. I got that training from Fathers Carrico and Cooney. They would beat your brains if you tried to make everything the same. They said writing was creative.

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ODDS AND ENDS

From the Pulpwoody Bookshelf
by
Link Hullar

Welcome back to the PULP COLLECTOR and to this varied assortment titled, "Odds and Ends". This time out we are going to take a brief look at a few westerns and then a couple of pulp related fantasy paperbacks. I hope that there will be something of interest for you.

Do you like westerns? Do you like mysteries? If the answer is "yes" to either of those questions then you should enjoy a series of novels by William Colt MacDonald involving a character named Gregory Quist. If my memory serves me correctly (some may consider that a big "if") it was MacDonald who wrote the novels about the Three Mequiteers, (a long running series of B-western movies) and he was also a prolific pulp writer---one of the best western pulp writers as a matter of fact. I do not know how many books make up the Greg Quist series, but I do know that they are Pulpwoody Paperbacks in the best of the pulp tradition. I have three of the Greg Quist paperbacks Hellgate (Belmont, 1969, original cover price .60 cents), Incident at Horcado City (Belmont, 1969, original cover price .60 cents), and Action at Arcanum (Avon, 1966, original cover price .40 cents). The original title for Hellgate was The Devils Drum and it was first copyrighted in 1956, the original title for Incident at Horcado City was The Osage Bow, and the original copyright date for Action at Arcanum was 1958. Greg Quist is a special investigator for the Texas Northern & Arizona Southern Railroad (or T.N. & A.S.)--in other words, he is a railroad "dick" or "troubleshooter". These novels fall into a class by themselves (or almost by themselves) as western detective adventures and they combine some of the best features independence in that he never has to

take a job he does not want. Needless to say, Quist takes only the most challenging of assignments. His headquarters are at the El Paso Piereson Hotel, where he maintains his office and living quarters on the second floor. This one room office/home is used by Quist to answer his mail, sleep while in town, and pursue his morning routines which include a six pack or so of warm beer. Quist carries a .44 in an underarm holster along with a pocketful of extra cartridges. he rarely uses a cartridge belt because he is of the opinion that if he cannot handle the situation with what is in his gun and a handful of extras, then it is most likely a lost cause. These books have the usual quota of western action along with the elements of good mystery. If you like westerns, mysteries, or the old pulps then give these westerns a try.

Next up this time around are two paperbacks by that old pulp veteran, Norvell W. Page. These two novels were originally published in 1939 in Unknown (thanks Albert) but were published in paperback by Berkley Medallion in 1969. Both originally sold for .60 cents on the bookstore shelves that year and the titles (and month of publication) of these two pulp-fantasy classics and Fiane Wings (September) and Sons of the Bear-God (November). These books relate the adventures of a legendary hero known as Prester John. In the introduction to the first book, Norvell Page traces the legend of Prester John and describes his own version of this legend. As Page sees him, Prester John is a wandering soldier of fortune who seeks wealth, fortune, and fame with his sword and skills. He is described as a "red-bearded ex-gladiator" and he carries a piece of the "True Cross" around his neck (a tie-in to the Christian traditions of the Prester John legend). These books are terrific pulp fun in the tradition of Robert E. Howard, Conan, Kull, and others (how many times have

you heard that line folks?). Seriously though, the Preater John paperbacks are enjoyable tales of pulp adventure from the fantasy genre and proof that you can enjoy pulp fiction for far less than pulp prices--just check out that local used bookstore. One final note here is that both books have outstanding covers by Jeff Jones complete with the usual clinging beauty. If they are not already the Preater John paperbacks are destined to soon be collectors items in their own right.

Time for me to wrap-up the column for now. Let me remind you that the point of this collection of "Odds and Ends" is to call to the attention

of readers a few good books that are available at low prices in the used paperback stores in most neighborhoods. The paperbacks do not have to be old classics from the forties and fifties but might go well into the seventies. If you are interested in this column then we need your input. Send us information on some of your favorite forgotten paperbacks (Just send along facts and descriptions of the books as you see in the above column) for inclusion amongst the "Odds and Ends". I will look forward to hearing from you at 19803 Brentonridge Lane, Spring, TX. 77379. Take care, take it easy, and take the time to write. Until later...

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There seemed nothing particularly outstanding about him as he sat on the bunk

of his tiny cell and stared thoughtfully at the blank gray wall a few feet ahead of him. Nothing, that is, unless it was the determined look about his lips and the straight, unwavering glance of his cold, blue eyes.

He had the expression of one resigned to his fate. But there was no trace of fear in his manner. He shot a glance at his wrist watch.

"Fourteen minutes more," he said.

The corners of his lips turned up in a faint smile. He unstrapped the wrist watch, turned it over and pried the back of the case open with a firm thumb nail. The smile lingered as he read the words:

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